

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Sion Hill

HA-525

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 2026 Level RoadN/A ☐ not for publicationcity, town Havre de Grace☒ vicinitystate Maryland code MDcounty Harfordcode 025zip code 21078

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

5  
1  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
6

Noncontributing

0 buildings  
\_\_\_\_ sites  
\_\_\_\_ structures  
\_\_\_\_ objects  
0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 6

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the  
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the National  
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ removed from the National Register.  
☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwellingDOMESTIC/secondary structuresAGRICULTURAL/agricultural fieldLANDSCAPE

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwellingDOMESTIC/secondary structuresAGRICULTURAL/agricultural fieldLANDSCAPE**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

GeorgianFederal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONEwalls BRICKroof SLATEother WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:**

Sion Hill, Harford County, Maryland, is a three-part brick mansion with a superb location at the crest of a long hill whose open fields and an occasional patch of woods gently slope down to yield panoramic views of the city of Havre de Grace about a mile and a half away, and, just beyond, of that point at which the Susquehanna River broadens out to form the Chesapeake Bay. These expansive vistas are an integral and essential feature of the house, as will be discussed in the Significance Section. The house has a 2 1/2-story, five-bay, gable roof center section flanked by two matching two-story, single-pitched roofed wings: the western wing was built as a private boys' academy and the eastern wing was--and is--for service. The house was begun c.1787 by the Rev. John Ireland; in 1795 Ireland sold the unfinished structure to merchant Gideon Denison; he died in 1799 (with the house still unfinished) and Sion Hill was inherited by his daughter Minerva; she and her husband, Commodore John Rodgers, would finish the house and since their marriage (1806) Sion Hill has been identified with the Rodgers family. Minerva and John Rodgers gave the main facades a richness of period details such as keystoned splayed stone window lintels, and sophisticated architectural treatments unique in Harford County and worthy of urbane centers such as Georgetown, where the Rodgers also had a home. The grounds contain a vestigial garden (some ancient boxwood, a formal sweep of lawn, several specimen trees) which seems to be contemporaneous with the house. A late 18th-century two-story brick tenant house is located roughly 200 yards north of the main dwelling. Also on the property--and all constructed by members of the Rodgers family--are two c.1930 stone outbuildings (a garage and a pump house) and a c.1900 frame barn.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☒ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

NHL Criteria 1

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Military

NHL Themes: See Continuation Sheet  
No. 8

Period of Significance  
1806-1933

Significant Dates  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:**

Sion Hill is significant as the seat of the sea-faring Rodgers family, described by the Dictionary of American Biography as the most notable of American naval families. Their generations'-long careers cover the world and affect virtually every aspect of American naval history from the presidency of Thomas Jefferson to the New Deal. The family's transcendentally important affiliation with the navy begins with the exceptional career of Commodore John Rodgers (1772-1839) and his triumphs over the Barbary pirates (1802-06) whose fleet he vanquished and with whom he negotiated treaties which mark some of America's earliest diplomatic successes. During the War of 1812 Rodgers was responsible for many of the (few) victories the American navy had over superior British foes. He was for years the navy's ranking officer. Rodgers (working with President Thomas Jefferson) was instrumental in constructing the country's first gunboats and in establishing the nation's first dry docks; he also began the navy's support system of hospitals, established what became the Naval Observatory in Washington, and constructed the navy's first steam-powered battleship. Rodgers was the first to see the need for a Naval Academy: he planned its initial curriculum and continuously lobbied for its establishment at Annapolis. (He died before it could be officially opened in 1845, but nephew Christopher Rodgers served as the Academy's president in the 1870s.) After his death, four generations of his direct descendants maintained the family's exceptionally significant presence in the navy: Commodore John Rodgers II (1812-1882) was honored by Lincoln during the Civil War (an elaborate set of Lincoln's presentation silver is still at Sion Hill), was president of both the United States Naval Institute and the first Naval Advisory Board and superintendent of the Naval Observatory, which his father, the first Commodore, had founded; Admiral John Rodgers (1848-1933) brought wireless telegraphy to the

☒ See continuation sheet No. 8  
For Historic Context

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Dictionary of American Biography, Vols. VII and VIII, (New York; Charles Scribner's Sons; Dumas Malone, editor).

C. Milton Wright, Our Harford Heritage, (Bel Air, MD: Privately printed, 1967).

Building by the Book, II, (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1986, Mario di Valmarana, editor).

Land and Probate Records, Harford County Courthouse, Bel Air; Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery Meigs Green, Sion Hill, Havre de Grace, MD.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Harford County, Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD.

Charles Oscar Paullin, Commodore John Rodgers, (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1910).

Dumas Malone, Jefferson The President, (Boston: The Little, Brown and Company, 1970).

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☒ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # MD 13-Hav.v-2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 315 acres more or less

USGS Quad: Aberdeen, MD; Havre de Grace, MD

UTM References

A 1,8 4,0,3,9,0,0 4,3,7,9,9,5,0  
Zone Easting Northing

C 1,8 4,0,2,5,5,0 4,3,7,9,5,1,0

B 1,8 4,0,3,7,7,0 4,3,7,8,3,3,0  
Zone Easting Northing

D 1,8 4,0,2,9,5,0 4,3,8,0,4,9,0

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are delineated on Continuation Sheet No. 20

☒ See continuation sheet No. 20

Boundary Justification

☒ See continuation sheet No. 19

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Christopher Weeks, Preservation Planner date November 1991

organization Harford County Government telephone (301) 879-2000

street & number 220 South Main Street state Maryland zip code 21014

city or town Bel Air

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Section number 7 Page 1GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The 315-acre Sion Hill estate crowns a gentle hill about a mile and a half north of Havre de Grace in eastern Harford County, Maryland. For seven generations Commodore John Rodgers and his descendants, who have in continuous succession owned Sion Hill, have kept that sweep of ground in open fields and pasture land to yield expansive vistas down to the city and to the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay beyond. These views are and always have been important to the house and symbolize the family's vitally important contribution to the nation as founders and developers of the American navy.

## MAIN HOUSE, c.1787 to c.1810, 1 contributing building

Although primarily associated with Commodore John Rodgers and his direct descendants, the three-part brick mansion was actually begun c.1785 by John Ireland, who ran a private boys' academy in the western wing, and used the center block as his main living area; services are in the eastern wing. Ireland sold Sion Hill to merchant Gideon Denison in 1795; "unfinished" according to the 1798 Federal Direct Tax, the house was inherited in 1799 (at Denison's death) by his daughter Minerva. She married Commodore Rodgers in 1806 and the Rodgerses would complete Sion Hill. The Flemish bond brick center block measures five bays across and 2 1/2 stories tall. The main (south and Bay-facing) facade is axial around the entrance door and pedimented porch, a three-part second story window (with an exceptionally elaborate arrangement of pilasters and dentiled and incised entablature), and a lunette (with a delicate keystone) attic window which is centrally placed within a modillioned and pedimented attic gable. This not only serves to mark the center of the house and heighten the symmetry, it also accurately suggests the center hall plan within. Side windows, two per floor, are nine-over-nine beneath flared stone lintels with bold keystones. Massive interior end chimneys heighten the overall effect of verticality and impressive grandeur. (The rear or land facade displays the same general theme in a less formal manner, i.e., the center second-story window lacks the three-part enrichment and the attic lunette is slightly simpler.) Both main facades have two-brick high beltcourses. The flanking wings are two stories tall; they are as deep as the main section and are one bay wide beneath sloping, single-pitched roofs. The wings' roofs' slopes are not as sharp as the main section's but nevertheless visually work well to lead the eye centrally upwards, heightening

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the monumental effect. By tradition, the chimneys are said to have been built especially tall to welcome John Rodgers home when he sailed into the Upper Chesapeake.<sup>1</sup>

On the interior, the main section has a broad center hall plan; the two largest and most formal rooms (the equal-sized Summer and Winter Dining Rooms) are to the east while two small twin parlors rooms and a stairway are to the west; the mathematics of this scheme are interesting (a three-part composition with one third kept a single unit, one third divided in half, one third divided in thirds) but in a broad context it is a slightly retardataire arrangement when compared with some other high-style late 18th-century five-part houses in Maryland which use the "Annapolis Plan."<sup>2</sup> The stair is in an open alcove reached from the hall through a segmental and pilastered archway. The stair, entirely original like almost every other feature of the house, rises in four open flights to the attic and has simple, federal balusters, rail, and newel post. The main feature in the hall is the pilastered segmental arch which is identical to the one leading to the stair alcove. Walls are plastered throughout; the plaster is original as is the bountiful amount of high quality and high style woodwork such as chair rails, mantels and over mantels, cornices, panelled doors, hardware, etc. Trim in the Winter Dining Room is particularly notable, as befits the space used for formal entertaining; the elaborate fireplace is not known to have a specific book source for inspiration; the opening is bordered by original blue and white Delft tiles; the entire fireplace is flanked by cabinets, all original.

The west wing retains its original spatial configuration (a schoolroom on the ground floor with dormitory cells above) although the schoolroom was remodeled into an informal living room in the 1940s. The east wing is the service wing; originally the larger north room was the pantry and the small south room was the kitchen; the present owners have reversed this arrangement; in addition, the original kitchen led to the Summer Dining Room by means of a small hall; that hall was made into a downstairs powder room. Otherwise, and except for necessary modernizations such as plumbing and electricity, the house is all but entirely unchanged from its c.1810 appearance. Indeed one biographer of John Rodgers notes that Sion Hill "has never been remodeled, and [in its purity] may still be seen...[as] being one of the most interesting relics...in Maryland."<sup>3</sup> This "purity" is doubtless because Sion Hill has been owned by the Rodgers family since that time and because the family have maintained it as a virtual shrine to Commodore John Rodgers

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(See Historic Context). The house is filled with furniture and objects owned by Rodgers, so many, in fact, that the Gallery Curator for the Maryland Historical Society recently called the house's contents "astonishing."<sup>4</sup>

## TENANT HOUSE, c.1790, 1 contributing building

Cited in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax, this two-story, gable roofed, common bond brick building is located about 200 yards north of the main house. It measures three bays by one with a small frame addition on the southern end; there are two rooms per floor. Presumably built at the same time as the main house, the tenant house (servants' quarters) has a brick beltcourse and flat arches over the windows--surprising touches of enrichment on a utilitarian structure. The six-over-six pegged windows, doors, and plain box cornice all appear to be original.

## GROUNDS, 1 contributing site

Not surprisingly, Sion Hill was originally set off by elaborate gardens, traces of which remain. Original (or very early) plantings include a formal boxwood garden southwest of the house (several ancient bushes remain but the overall design is largely lost), a park-like swath of open grass to the northeast of the house (possibly used for evening walks), and several specimen trees such as beech, holly, magnolia grandiflora, and osage orange. The gardens remain an integral part of the overall design of the estate, although the system of driveways has been changed: as depicted on C.F. Haudecouer's 1799 map of Havre de Grace, Sion Hill's original driveway circled the house so one arrived at the main (Bay front) facade and a service drive branched off it to lead to the rear facade and kitchen wing; this invited "sightseers" and the present owners took out the drive to the main facade and relaid a driveway to the north facade, which is how one approaches today; the service drive is still in place. The views from the house southward to the Bay are virtually unchanged from the time of Commodore Rodgers and also contribute to the significance of the resource as will be discussed in Section 8. The once formal area around the main house (which has now taken on a rather romantic quality) is separated from the tenant house by a cedar hedge of great age, a rail fence, and a pasture.

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BARN, c.1900, 1 contributing building

A variety of farm buildings once stood in the pasture/farmyard between house and tenant house, but they deteriorated and most have been removed. Remaining is a c.1900 one story plus attic frame barn; it is unused.

GARAGE AND PUMP HOUSE, c.1930, 2 contributing buildings

Nearer the house is a stone garage and a stone pump house; both are c.1930 one-story structures of utilitarian use and design. Robert Rodgers, AIA, a son of John Augustus and Elizabeth Chambers Rodgers, was their architect.



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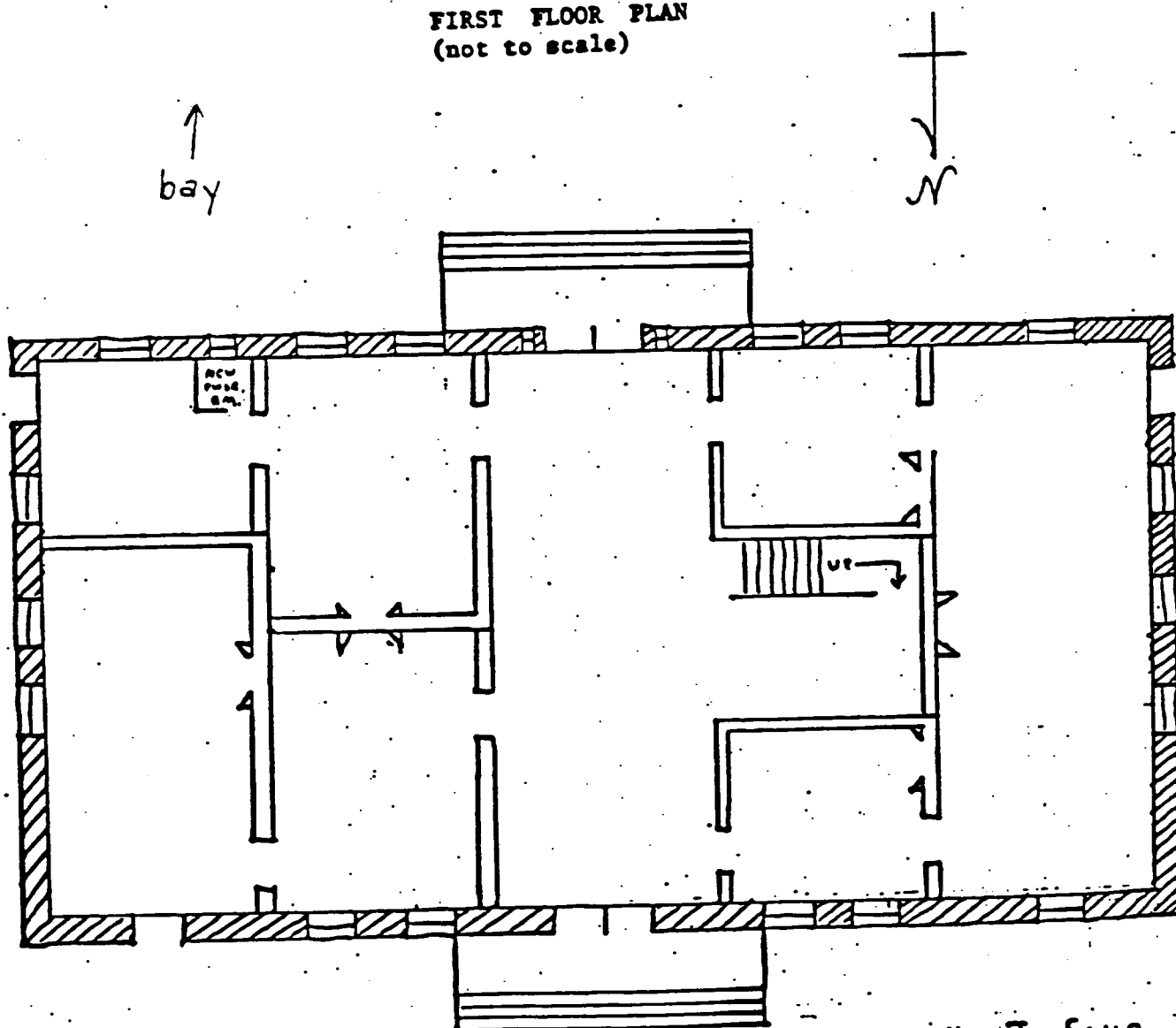
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
(not to scale)



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EXCEPT FOR NEW PAINTED ROOM  
ALL INTERIOR WALLS REMOVED & RECONSTRUCTED

NOT TO SCALE  
C. WEEKS

drive

See Continuation Sheet No. 6

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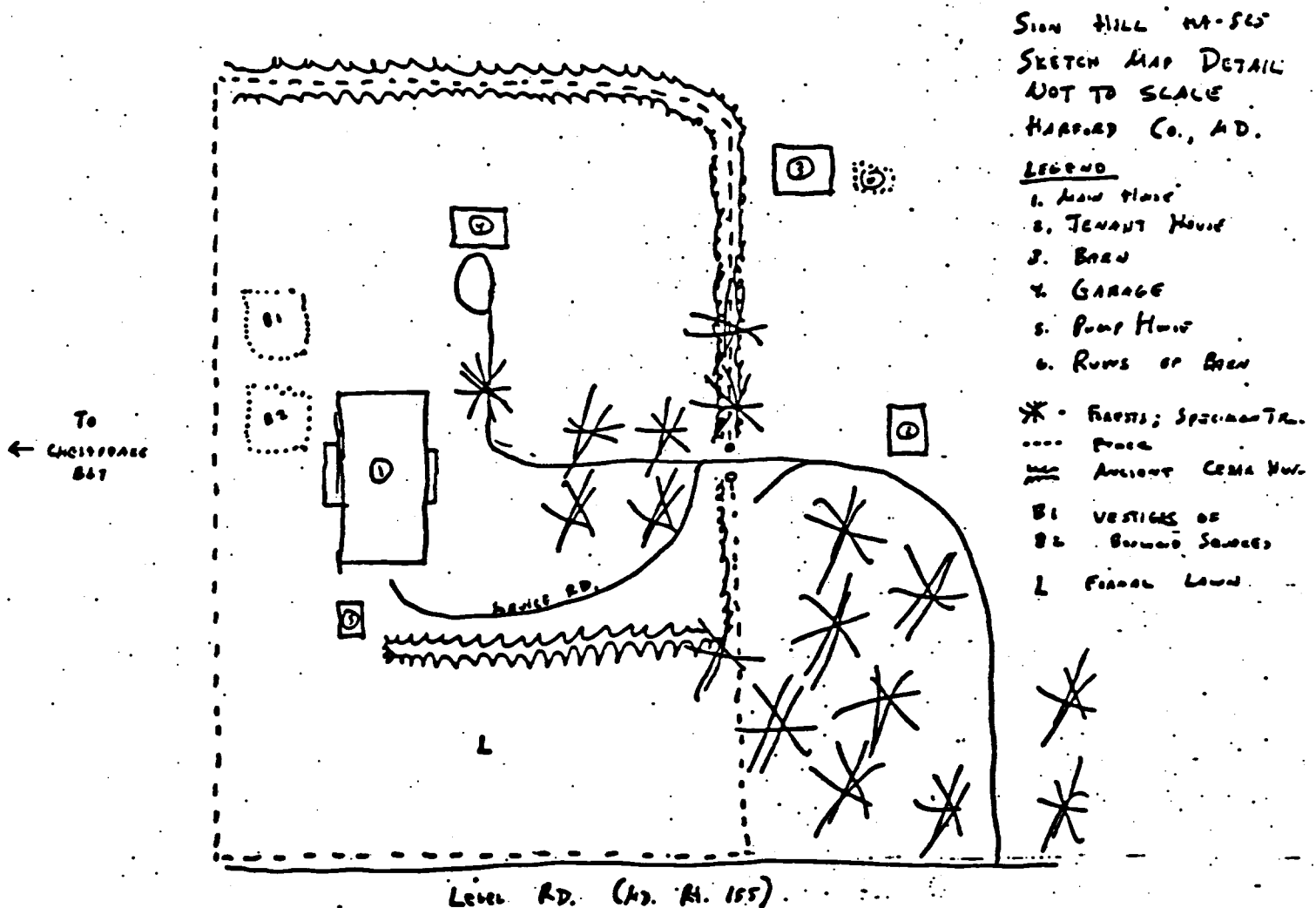
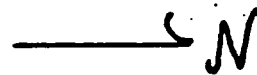
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## RESOURCE SKETCH MAP



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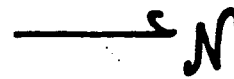
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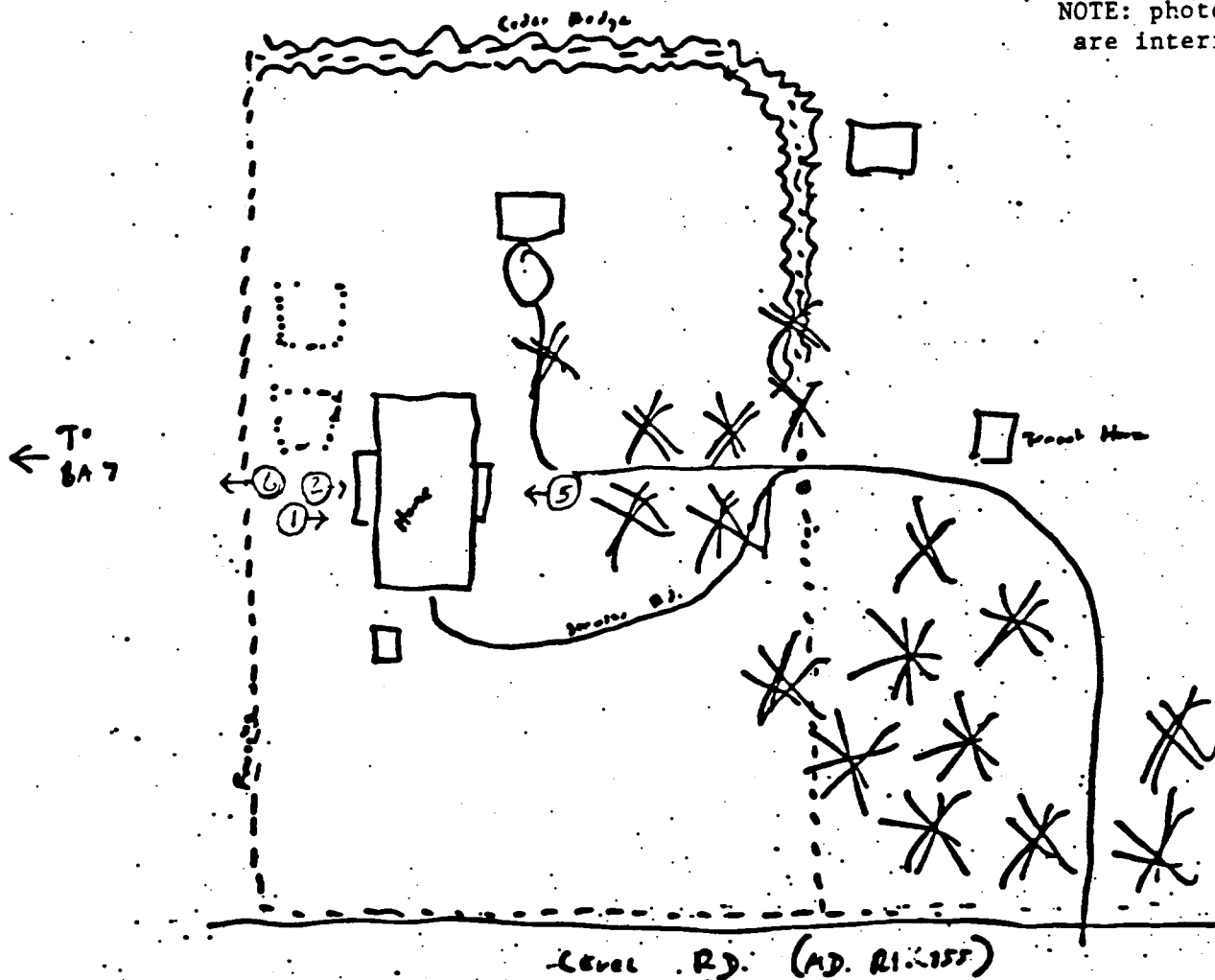
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## PHOTOGRAPH MAP



NOTE: photos 3 & 4  
are interior views



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navy; Commander John Rodgers (1881-1926) was a pioneer in Naval aviation and was first commandant of the air base at Pearl Harbor. Family marriages underscore these unequalled naval associations: the eldest son of Commodore Rodgers, Robert Smith Rodgers (1809-1891), married Sarah Perry, daughter of Matthew Perry who himself had served under Commodore Rodgers in the Barbary wars; R.S. Rodgers's sister Ann Maria married a sister of Matthew and Oliver Hazard Perry. Sion Hill is still owned by direct descendants of Commodore Rodgers although the male line ended in 1933, was home to each of these Rodgers and their families. The finest high-style house known to have been constructed in rural Harford County, Maryland in the 18th century, Sion Hill is virtually unchanged, inside and out, from when it was completed for Commodore Rodgers and his wife. Sion Hill has always been intimately associated with the Rodgers family: it received its final form by Commodore Rodgers and it saw the births and deaths of nearly all his descendants (one Rodgers was born in Washington in 1881). The Dictionary of American Biography notes that "the Rodgers' home was at Havre de Grace." Sion Hill is replete with original Rodgers furnishings, and has been maintained by the family almost as a shrine to the first Commodore.

NHL THEMES:

- V. Political Military Affairs, 1783-1860
  - D. Jefferson Period 1800-1811
  - E. War of 1812, 1812-1815
- VI. The Civil War
  - D. Naval Action
- VII. Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1939
  - D. America Becomes a World Power, 1865-1914
    - 1. Military Affairs
  - F. Military Affairs Not Related to World War I or World War II, 1914-1941

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Section number 8 Page 9HISTORIC CONTEXT:

In 1806 Commodore John Rodgers married Minerva Denison in the north parlor at Sion Hill; Denison brought the unfinished house with her to the marriage as dowry and from that moment Sion Hill has been intimately associated with the Rodgerses. Based at Sion Hill, successive generations of Rodgerses achieved national significance by creating and shaping the United States Navy, becoming, in the words of the Dictionary of American Biography "the most noted of American naval families."

Although the house's period of national significance begins with the first Commodore John Rodgers, its history can be traced back to the Rev. John Ireland, who bought an unimproved tract here in 1787<sup>5</sup> and began the house, which he used as Sion Hill Seminary, a private school for boys. In 1795 Ireland sold the property to Gideon Denison (1753-1799)<sup>6</sup>, a wealthy Connecticut merchant whom the Dictionary of American Biography describes as "a descendant of Capt. George Denison, called 'the Miles Standish of Connecticut.'"<sup>7</sup> The 1798 Federal Direct Tax cites Denison as owner of Sion Hill,<sup>8</sup> described as a "Brick dwelling, two stories, 10 ft. piazza on one side and each end 15 ft. wide, 40 x 42." It is also described as being in an "unfinished state."

Some sources have suggested that Denison "was attracted to Havre de Grace, thinking it might be the site for the new national capital" and that he added the elegant and stylish federal period touches.<sup>9</sup> But the District of Columbia had been selected as the site in 1790. Instead, it might be better to assume that Denison thought that Havre de Grace was destined to grow into a large city<sup>10</sup> and that he bought the house thinking that a stylish and elegant residence would be desirable; he certainly bought a good deal of additional land on speculation and increased Ireland's original tract of 60 acres to 1,820 acres.

For "stylish" and "elegant" are assuredly what Sion Hill is; no other extant building in Harford County displays such a thoroughly complete and correct understanding of period design dicta. Nor is there any evidence that any building ever did. In overall massing and design and in scale and in refinement of stylish details (see description), the house is the finest building of its time in the county and is equal to the best of the era's dwellings in more cosmopolitan areas such as Philadelphia (such as Mount Pleasant [c.1765] and the Penn family's The Solitude [c.1773]) and Georgetown, District of Columbia (such as Tudor Place

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[1815], Evermay [c.1801], and Cox's Row [c.1815]).

There is no known precedent for Sion Hill in Harford County. No documentation has been found but it is at least arguable that the house owes its rich details not to Ireland or Denison (recall it was unfinished a year before the latter died) but to Denison's daughter, Minerva, and her husband, Commodore John Rodgers. Minerva Denison acquired Sion Hill on her father's death in 1799; she married Rodgers in 1806 and the couple kept a secondary residence in a series of houses in the District of Columbia when he served as President of the Board of Naval Commissioners (1815-1837). It seems highly likely that the Rodgerses finished Sion Hill to reflect stylish houses they would have seen in Washington. It is known that when the couple ordered furniture for Sion Hill they chose furniture that was crafted in the highest style possible, including tables attributed to Duncan Phyfe and a sofa attributed to Charles-Honore Lannuier. The house's splendor was well-known among the federal-era elite: for example in 1815 Mary Boardman Crowninshield learned that her husband was going to visit Commodore and Mrs. Rodgers at Sion Hill and asked him to determine "Is the furniture handsomer than ours?"<sup>11</sup>

Commodore John Rodgers, known as the "Father of the American Navy",<sup>12</sup> was a son of Colonel John Rodgers, a Scots immigrant who ran the important ferryline across the Susquehanna between Havre de Grace and Perryville, held a monopoly on tavern-trade in those towns, and, according to the Dictionary of American Biography, was the "founder of the most noted of American naval families."<sup>13</sup>

The only complete history of Harford County succinctly observes that "among the sons of Harford...there are none due greater honor than the members of the Rodgers family."<sup>14</sup> While Col. Rodgers himself played an important role in the development of northeastern Maryland and while several of his other children became renowned (for instance daughter Maria Anna, who married William Pinkney, a noted jurist ["the greatest man I ever saw in a court of justice," praised Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney] and diplomat ["America never sent an abler representative to the Court of London," wrote Henry Adams]), the member of the family who achieved undeniable and international importance was Commodore John Rodgers.

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He was educated at home; "through his reading of books about the sea [he] received an impress that determined his career."<sup>15</sup> He entered the infant U.S. Navy in 1798 and was made a First Lieutenant on the frigate Constellation; in 1799 he was promoted to the rank of Captain, "the first lieutenant in the navy under the Constitution to be advanced to this rank"<sup>16</sup> and placed in charge of the sloop Maryland cruising first in the West Indies and then in the Mediterranean.

Thomas Jefferson, during his first administration (1801-1805) sought to reduce the size of the navy. He cut the number of frigates from 13 to 6 and the number of captains from 19 to 9.<sup>17</sup> Rodgers (who retained his commission) fought this policy; in this he was aided by the Secretary Navy (and his Harford County neighbor) Robert Smith. (Rodgers's oldest surviving child was named Robert Smith Rodgers.) Rodgers was back in his native Havre de Grace in 1802. During this visit he met Minerva Denison. In her memoirs the future bride describes her "uneventful life at Sion Hill", uneventful, that is, "until I met Captain John Rodgers....I had previously heard Captain Rodgers spoken of. His reputation was known to the country....He had been much talked of and published in the papers...but I had never seen him as he was seldom at home, most of his time spent at sea." After the initial meeting "his visits [to Sion Hill] became frequent and his attentions to me very conspicuous. However he was ordered to sea and our love affair made no great progress."<sup>18</sup>

Jefferson ordered Rodgers "to sea" to fight the Barbary pirates, then the bane of American and European shipping in the Mediterranean. In 1805, the year before Rodgers married Minerva Denison, he was placed in command of the entire American squadron in the Mediterranean; during the wars with the Barbary Pirates (1802-06), Rodgers wrecked havoc on the enemy, destroying ships and in general "playing a part exceeded in importance by that of no other naval officer...his conduct was cordially approved of by the secretary of the navy and the president and he was hailed and toasted as a popular hero."<sup>19</sup> He also "forced Tripoli to sign a treaty to end slavery of Christians" in 1805.<sup>20</sup>

In sum, "no other officer played so large a part in" the war as Rodgers. As senior officer he commanded "the blockading fleet off Tripoli...the largest cruisers of the pasha's navy and several smaller craft surrendered to him...during the peace negotiations ...he...was the chief actor....Rodgers...humbled the proud and insulting corsairs, set an example to all Europe of a spirited and

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forcible resistance to extortion and blackmail, strengthened abroad our reputation as a nation for military courage and political initiative, and popularized, trained, and consolidated our infant navy."<sup>21</sup> These feats are doubly remarkable when it is recalled that he was able to perform them with a navy that had been much-reduced in size. For his many and varied accomplishments Rodgers was made Commodore (then the highest rank in the navy) and was placed in command of the naval flagship President. In July 1807 he was made commander of the "New York Flotilla and naval station...the most important office at the disposal of the naval department."<sup>22</sup>

Peace restored, Rodgers resumed his struggles with the cost-conscious Jefferson (and Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin) over naval expenses. Rodgers convinced his superiors to build what were called "gunboats," which are, as Dumas Malone explains, "small craft [which] cost but little to build and almost nothing for maintenance"; Rodgers had demonstrated the merit of these craft "in the shallow waters off the Barbary Coast"; from the president's point of view "they had the further merit of being cheap."<sup>23</sup>

Jefferson "sent some of his ablest commanders to building these vessels...[and] in the fall of 1806 Commodore Rodgers was ordered to construct a gunboat at Havre de Grace."<sup>24</sup> While thus occupied he also found time to resume his courtship of Minerva Denison and "the date of his marriage...was fixed. The young couple were quietly married in the green room at Sion Hill...The Baltimore Federal Gazette" covered the story in its October 31, 1806, issue and "for some time Commodore and Mrs. Rodgers remained at Sion Hill."<sup>25</sup>

At about this time Rodgers and Jefferson hit upon a "most interesting proposal with respect to naval vessels that were not in use...[and] proposed to add to the Navy Yard in Washington a dock in which vessels could be 'laid up dry and under cover from sun.'" Dumas Malone notes that as a result of this Rodgers/ Jefferson innovation, Jefferson "brought Benjamin Henry Latrobe to Washington, and that architect and engineer produced a plan so pleasing to him that he afterwards made Latrobe surveyor of public buildings."<sup>26</sup> Rodgers remained "interested in the subject of dry docks and...during his first term as navy commissioner [see below] recommended their construction" at Norfolk and Boston.<sup>27</sup> Latrobe certainly remained a valued friend to Rodgers and the architect's letters back to his brother, C.I. Latrobe, in England are filled with praise for the seaman. For example on October 28, 1811,



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Latrobe wrote his brother lauding "one of my oldest and most intimate friends, Captain Rodgers....In our little war with Tripoli, he acquired fame of a most undaunted officer....On shore he is a good farmer, a most amiable husband and father, and in all respects, [has] unimpeached and unimpeachable morals. He is also the most powerful man in respect to bodily strength in the country."<sup>28</sup>

By 1812 Rodgers was Chief Commander of the entire American fleet, the "ranking officer in active service;"<sup>29</sup> after war broke out with England in 1812 he fought (and won) several engagements with the British navy in the Caribbean and in the North Sea where he raided the coast of Scotland. The American forces lost most of the war's initial land battles; consequently "while the news...was almost all bad, the spirits of Americans were sustained by a series of victories at sea by ships of the minuscule navy" led by Rodgers.<sup>30</sup> Scholars have determined that of all the American naval officers at the time, "he understood best the principles of naval strategy."<sup>31</sup> After the British burned Washington and moved on Baltimore in 1813, Rodgers "saved Baltimore from attack by obstructing the channel, sinking vessels for that purpose."<sup>32</sup>

Rodgers--"my idea of the perfect naval commander," praised noted Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton--retired from active service in 1815 and returned to Sion Hill, although he did serve as President of the Board of Navy Commissioners from 1815 until 1837; that body "ranked next to the members of the cabinet in the administrative hierarchy of Washington."<sup>33</sup> In this capacity he continued to experiment with dry docks and oversaw "the creation of several new naval establishments" including navy hospitals in Philadelphia, Norfolk, Boston, New York, and Pensacola, the first such institutions in America. He was also involved in establishing "the Depot of Charts and Instruments, out of which grew the Naval Observatory...in Washington"; during his last year in office he was planning "a South Seas exploring expedition, which finally set sail in 1838."<sup>34</sup>

In 1835, towards the end of his career, he encouraged the navy to build "the first vessel of the steam navy...[and Rodgers] made a report recommending the early deployment of steam vessels by the navy."

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Interested in creating a formal training ground for naval officers (his own training having been on-the-job) in 1826 Rodgers began lobbying to establish a naval academy. "In 1831 as president of the navy board he wrote a letter to the secretary of the navy setting forth the views of the commission respecting a naval academy." Rodgers proposed that "the new institution was to be located at Annapolis, and a naval captain was to act as its superintendent. Instruction was to be given in 'all the living languages,' mathematics, surveying, navigation, drawing, and fencing. A small ship-rigged vessel, armed with several cannon, was to be stationed at the school for use in teaching seamanship and the handling of guns."<sup>35</sup> (Rodgers died before the Naval Academy was opened officially in 1845.)

When ill health forced him to resign his positions, the National Intelligencer recorded that "Commodore Rodgers, one of the oldest and most faithful of our public servants...has resigned...Few men living have for such a length of time...rendered more important services to their country." He died of cholera in 1838. (Rodgers was not only a war hero, he was punctilious in the extreme in his business life; in his Last Will and Testament he left his "beloved wife Minerva, all and Singular the Estate real, personal, and mixed of which I may die possessed" but took the trouble to remind her to pay his debts including one "due to Mr. Bennett of Georgetown of 15c" as well as three "small debts" to three grocers and "a small sum due [unreadable], apothecary.")<sup>36</sup>

For years Rodgers's duties had forced his family to keep some sort of quarters in Washington. Beginning around 1820 they lived in a house at Greenleaf Point, at P Street near the navy yard in Southeast Washington. The house has been demolished. About 1835 Rodgers and his family moved to Madison Place facing Lafayette Square. That house was demolished in 1895, replaced with the Belasco Theater, one exterior of which was marked by a plaque inscribed "This was the site of the home of Commodore John Rodgers." But none of these residences--even if they were standing (which they aren't)--would be as intimately associated with the navy hero and his descendants as Sion Hill is.

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Minerva Rodgers lived on in Washington until her own death in 1877. In 1841, three years after the Commodore had died, she gave 1800 acres and Sion Hill to her oldest son, Robert Smith Rodgers;<sup>37</sup> in her Will--she identifies herself in that document as "the widow of the late Commodore John Rodgers"--she left \$20,000 cash bequests to each of several children ("that being the price of the house in LaFayette Square") and then set up a complicated Trust for the benefit of her children and grandchildren, with her son Commodore John Rodgers and son-in-law "General M.C. Meigs of the U.S. Army" to manage it. Excluded as a beneficiary of the Trust was "my son Robert, [he] having received the Gift of the Farm in Maryland called Sion Hill."<sup>38</sup> (While in the District, Louisa Rodgers, one of Minerva's and John's daughters, met and married Montgomery C. Meigs, future Quartermaster General of the Union Army in the Civil War and builder of such well-known Washington landmarks as the Pension Building, the Washington Aqueduct, and the Capitol dome; it is from this marriage that the present owner of Sion Hill is descended.)

Four successive generations of the Rodgers family would continue the first Commodore's extraordinary role in shaping the U.S. Navy. They would also (and concurrently) maintain Sion Hill as their principal residence. Robert Smith Rodgers was born (1809) and died (1891) at Sion Hill. After earning his degree in engineering at the University of Pennsylvania "from 1830 to 1841 he served as an assistant civil engineer in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Enlisting as a private in the United States Army at the beginning of the Civil War, he was soon promoted to the rank of Colonel and was engaged chiefly in the battles of the Shenandoah Valley."<sup>39</sup>

Although Robert Smith Rodgers served in the army, the navy maintained its formidable presence at Sion Hill: in 1841 (the year he received Sion Hill and the year he retired from the surveying business) Robert Rodgers married Sarah Perry, daughter of Commander Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) thereby creating a most impressive naval union. Interestingly, as a youth of 16--long before he was chosen in 1852 to "open" Japan, "the most important diplomatic mission ever entrusted to an American naval officer"<sup>40</sup>--Matthew Perry had served under Commodore John Rodgers during the wars with the Barbary pirates on the President; Perry was much influenced by his commanding officer, for, according to the Dictionary of American Biography, "John Rodgers [was] a bluff disciplinarian who stamped many of his qualities upon the young subaltern."<sup>41</sup>

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Connections between America's two premier naval families continued when Ann Maria Perry, sister of Matthew and Oliver Hazard, married George Washington Rodgers (1787-1832), a younger brother of Commodore John. The family's nautical contributions continued in that cadet branch, too, for G.W. Rodgers fought in the Barbary wars and in the War of 1812; "Congress recognized his services by voting him a silver medal and his native state rewarded him by giving him a sword."<sup>42</sup> George Washington Rodgers and Ann Maria Perry Rodgers had a son, Christopher, who was Superintendent of the Naval Academy (that institution his <sup>uncle</sup> grandfather had envisioned and planned) from 1877-78 and then served as commander in chief of the Pacific squadron from 1878-80. "Several [of their sons] reached the highest naval rank."<sup>43</sup> An astonishing quantity of Perry memorabilia (prints and furniture from Japan as well as uniforms, a dispatch box, portraits, etc.) still fills Sion Hill.

If Robert S. Rodgers was an agriculturalist and--inexplicably--an army man, his brother, Commodore John Rodgers II (1812-1882) continued the Rodgerses' extraordinary naval associations. Born at Sion Hill, he entered an early version of the Naval Academy in 1828 (after a year at the University of Virginia), was graduated and saw duty in the Mediterranean and in the Seminole War; promoted to Lieutenant, from 1842-1860 he "was in charge of vessels on surveying expeditions in the Mediterranean, North Pacific, and Arctic Ocean." In 1852 "he succeeded Commander Cadwalader Ringgold as commander of the North Pacific Exploring and Surveying Expedition," sailing into the Arctic Ocean "where he explored unknown regions and obtained information that corrected the Admiralty's charts."<sup>44</sup>

He started his service in the Civil War with the rank of Commander, but Lincoln had him promoted to rank of Commodore, citing the "zeal, bravery, and good conduct" so characteristic of the family. Serving under Admiral duPont, John Rodgers II was honored by being allowed to "hoist the first American flag on the rebellious soil of South Carolina." After the war, he was Commandant first at the Boston Navy Yard (1866-'69) and at the Mare Island Navy Yard (1873-'77) in California. In the interim, he was sent to the Pacific in 1871 to attempt to negotiate a treaty with Korea. (He was unsuccessful.) He also served as Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, which his father had established: from 1877-82 and "secured for the observatory its present site and made certain its reconstruction on more ample lines."<sup>45</sup> At his death he was "the senior Rear Admiral on the active list."<sup>46</sup>

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John Rodgers II's substantial contributions to the navy are matched by those of his nephew, Robert S. and Sarah Perry Rodgers' son, John Augustus Rodgers. Born at Sion Hill in 1848, he entered the Naval Academy in 1863, eventually seeing duty in "European, Asiatic, and home waters."<sup>47</sup> During the Spanish-American War, he was executive officer of the U.S.S. Indiana, and was advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral "for eminent conduct in battle."<sup>48</sup> In 1904 Admiral Rodgers was among the few navymen with vision enough to push for use of wireless telegraphy: he chaired and eventually convinced a committee to adopt that invention. In 1910 he retired from active duty to teach at Harvard and at the Institute of Naval Technology. He died at home at Sion Hill in 1933 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Admiral Rodgers married Elizabeth Chambers and they had three sons. Alexander was an explorer who was unfortunately lost and presumably died in the Yukon. Robert was an architect; he practiced in New York but designed a pump house and a garage at Sion Hill for his parents. (He died a bachelor.) There was also Commander John Rodgers (1881-1926). By a quirk, he was born in Washington, D.C., not at Sion Hill and the compilers of The Dictionary of American Biography were quick to note this oddity and to point out that "the Rodgers' home was at Havre de Grace, Maryland."<sup>49</sup>

Educated at Lawrenceville and at the Naval Academy (from which he was graduated in 1903), young Rodgers saw action "during the World War...in the submarine service and on North Sea mine barrage duty."<sup>50</sup> Commander Rodgers was just as interested in new technology as his forbears had been: his great-grandfather, the first Commodore, developed steam-powered battleships; his father had advocated use of the telegraph; the younger Rodgers pioneered naval aviation. He was just the second American naval officer to be licensed as an aviator and from 1922 until 1925 he established and was "commander of the Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii."<sup>51</sup> In 1925, while he and four other men were flying back to Hawaii after a trip to San Francisco, their plane crashed in the Pacific 400 miles short of their goal. After floating at sea for several days Rodgers was rescued and was then given a desk job as Chief of the Bureau of Naval Aeronautics, "in recognition of his sterling qualities as an aviator and his ability as a seaman and navigator."<sup>52</sup> But this did not suit his personality and he resigned in 1926 to resume flying and experimenting. That August, he was placed in command of a "new scouting seaplane squadron created for experimental purposes at San Diego."<sup>53</sup> After 11 days

See Continuation Sheet No. 18

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in San Diego, Rodgers was piloting a plane to Philadelphia, when it crashed in the Delaware River and killed him.

Commander Rodgers had no children, thus 1933, the year his father, Admiral Rodgers, died, might serve to mark the end of Sion Hill's period of significance if for no other reason than that future owners have not borne the Rodgers surname -- although these owners are all descendants of the first Commodore John Rodgers.

These owners, moreover, have been always aware of how important the spirit of the first John Rodgers is to Sion Hill and have kept the house and farm going almost as a memorial to him. For instance, in her Last Will and Testament (probated in 1944), Elizabeth Chambers Rodgers (the flying Rodgers's mother and Admiral Rodgers's widow), takes a good deal of trouble to explain how she chose to "dispose of my estate known as Sion Hill...inherited by me from my late husband." Continuing, "I intend to make such disposition as, in my opinion, will most fully assure the indefinite continuance of the premises in the possession and control of a descendant of John Rodgers." To this end, she left Sion Hill to her nephew, John Meigs; he, in turn, passed the property to its present owner, Montgomery Meigs Green, in 1946.<sup>54</sup> Somewhat miraculously, these later owners have been able to fulfill Elizabeth Chambers Rodgers's wishes and Sion Hill--mansion and outbuildings, gardens and Bay vistas--remains nearly unchanged since John and Minerva Rodgers' day, an intact reminder of the time when Commodore John Rodgers established, at Sion Hill, "the most noted of American naval families."

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Section number 10 Page 19BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The 315 acres included in this nomination constitutes all the land which has descended in family ownership with the house. It represents the full extent of the land directly associated with the resources during the periods and areas of significance. Although the present-day tax assessment maps for Harford County illustrate the property as being divided into multiple parcels, the property is visually one unit with the complex of resources standing on only parcel number 198. The remaining parcels are undeveloped with no standing structures, but are a part of the grounds and setting addressed in the significance section. Physically surrounded by the Sion Hill property but intentionally and expressly excluded from the nomination is the property called Mount Felix, parcel number 443 on the boundary map. The history of Mount Felix is separate and different from that of Sion Hill. Mount Felix was developed in the mid-nineteenth century on land acquired from the Rodgers family, but not by the Rodgers family. No resources associated with Sion Hill are located on the Mount Felix property. As Mount Felix is distinctly separate historically from Sion Hill, and physically concentrated in a clearly defined and physically non-intrusive area, the decision was made to exclude the property entirely rather than include it and mark it as non-contributing.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

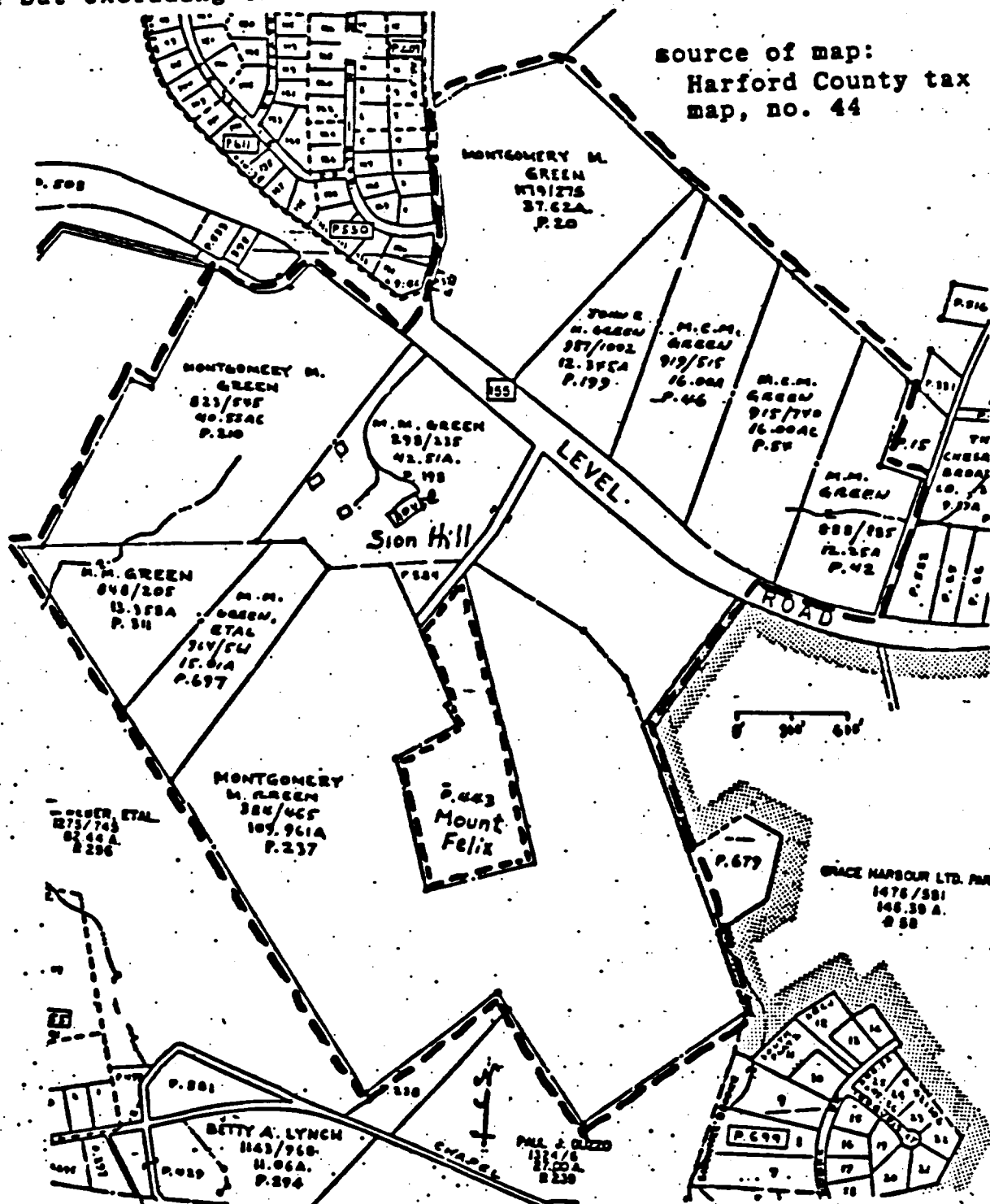
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The property consists of the parcels encircled by the broken line but excluding the Mount Felix property, parcel 443.





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Harford Co.  
Maryland

Map 1

A 18 43900/  
4379950

3 18 403770/  
4378330

SION HILL  
Harford County, Maryland  
UTM Coordinates

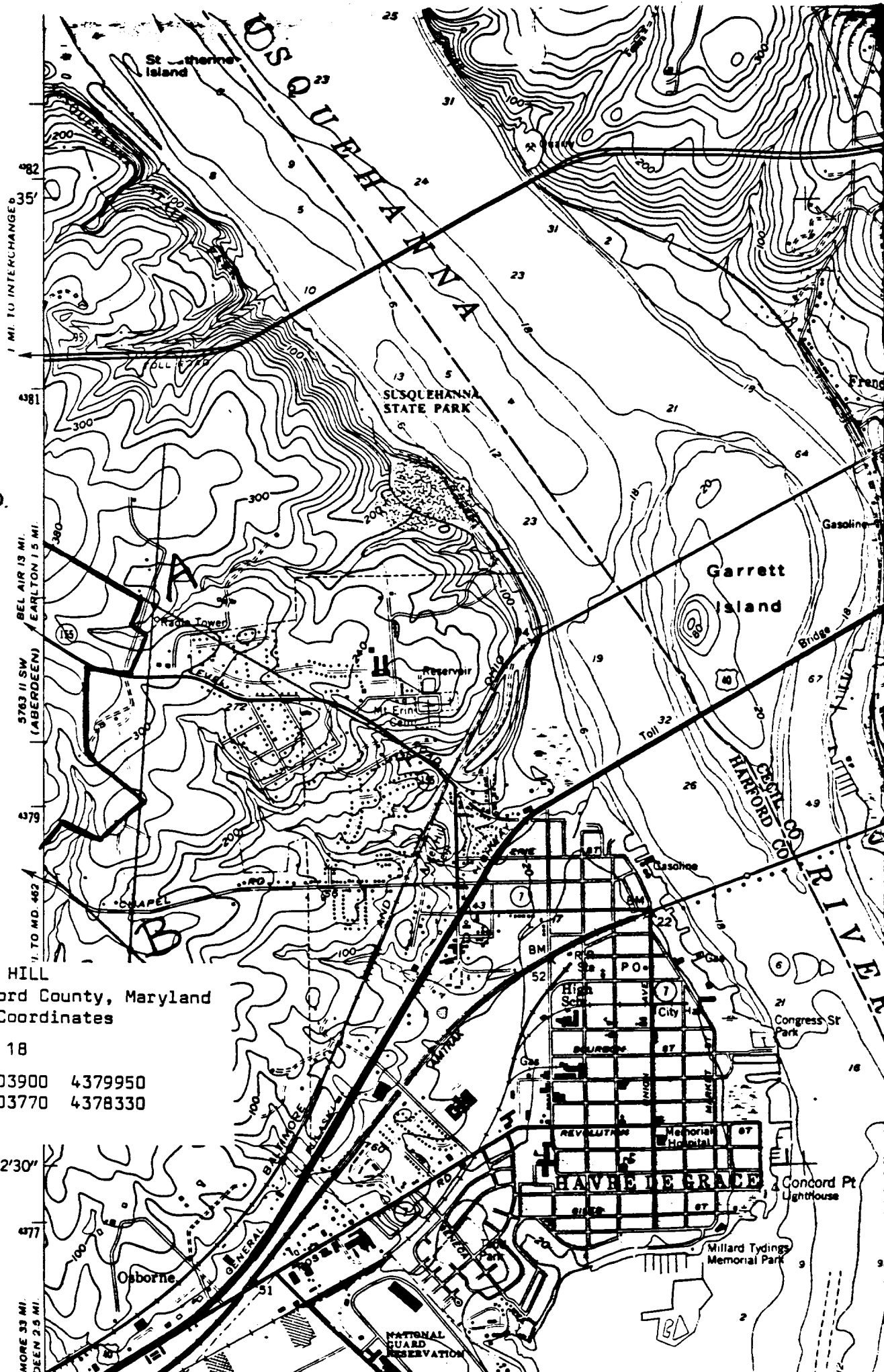
Zone 18

A 403900 4379950

B 403770 4378330

32'30"

Harve de Grace  
quad



Sion Hill  
Harford Co.  
Maryland  
map 2

80  
C 18/402550/4379510  
D 18/402950/4380490

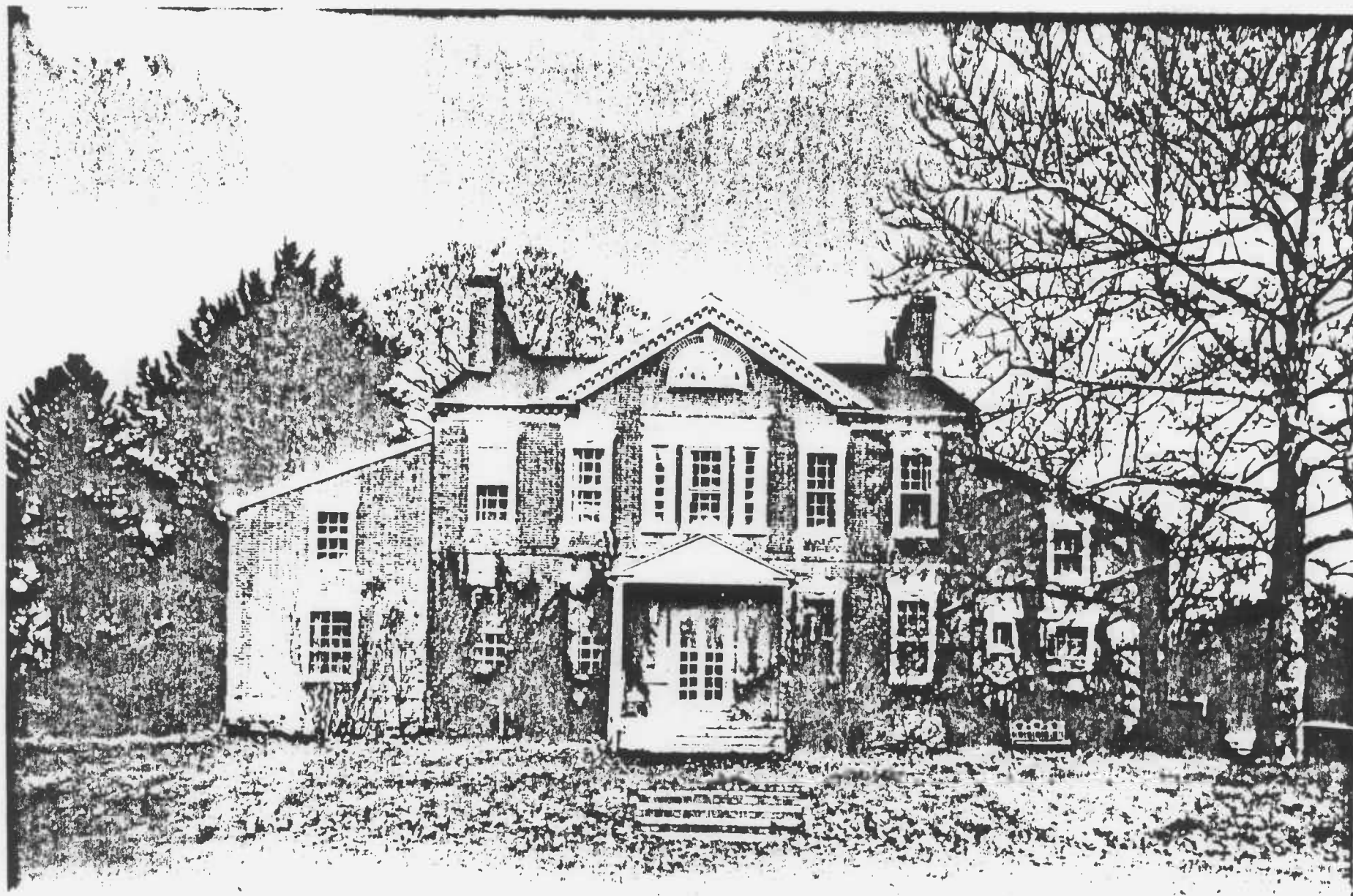
SION HILL  
Harford County, Maryland  
UTM Coordinates

## Zone 18

C 402550 4379510

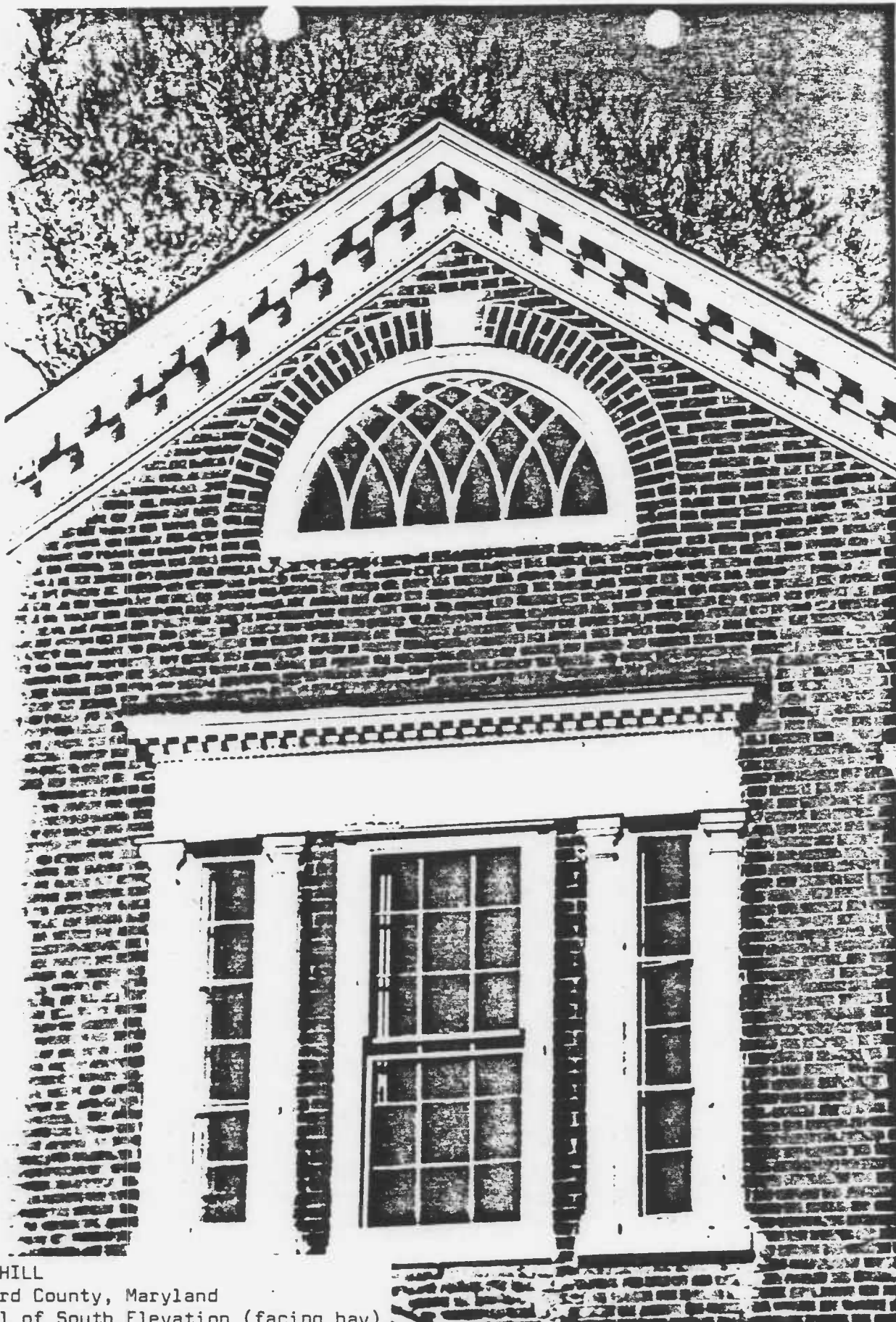
D 402950 4380490

Aberdeen quard



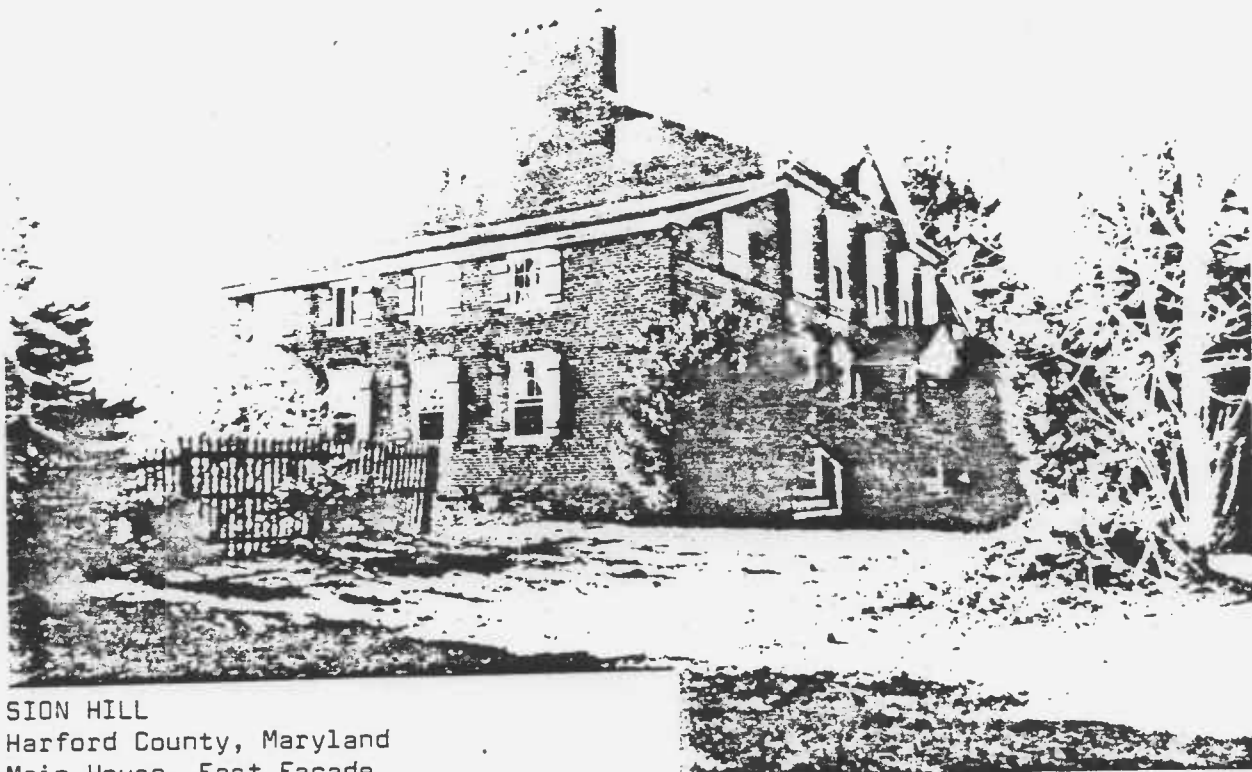
SION HILL  
Harford County, Maryland  
South Elevation (facing bay)  
Photo by Jeremy Green, November 1991

HA-525



SION HILL

Irford County, Maryland  
Detail of South Elevation (facing bay)  
Photo by Jeremy Green, November 1991

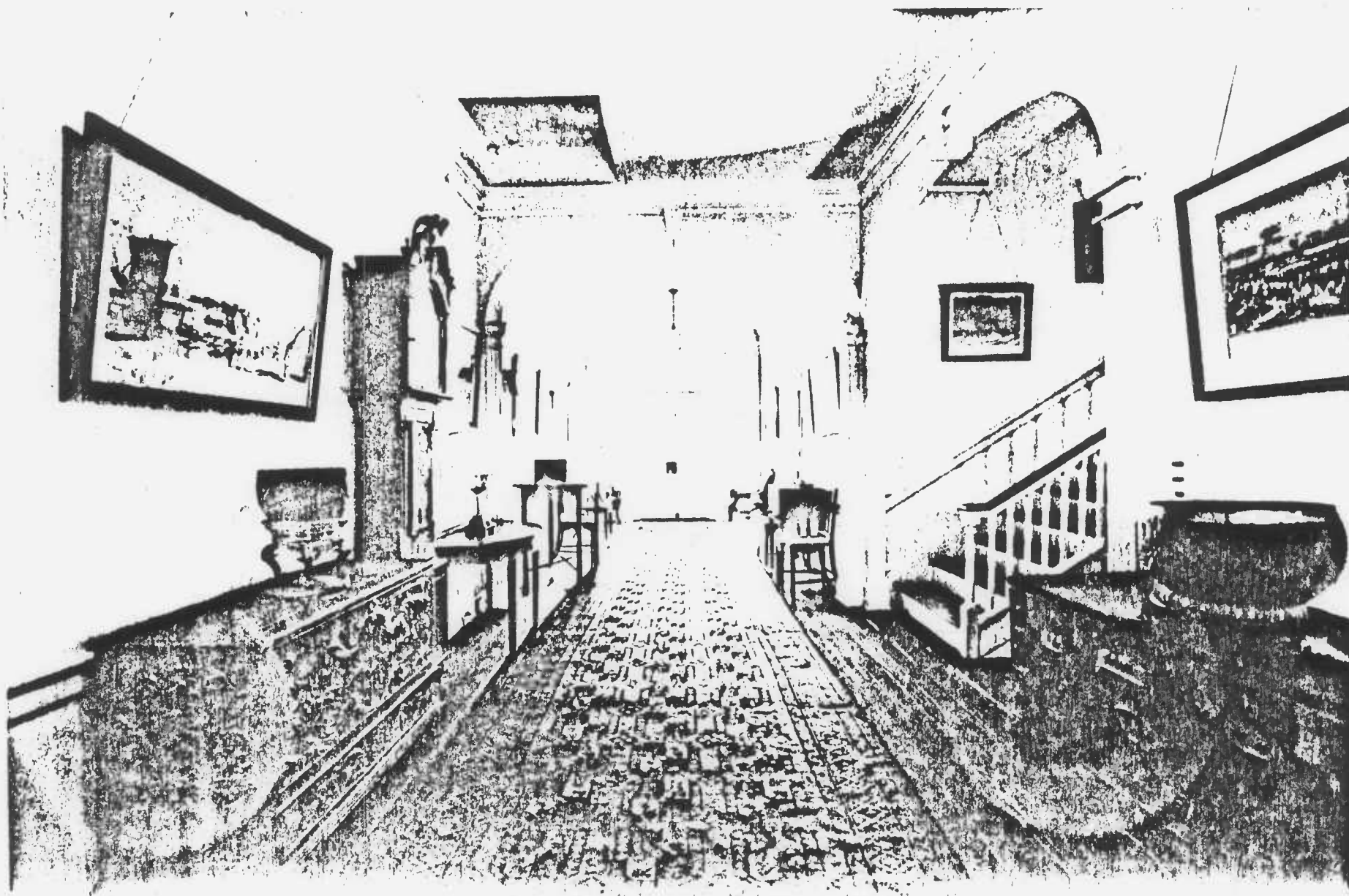


SION HILL  
Harford County, Maryland  
Main House, East Facade  
Photo by Christopher Weeks, December 1989





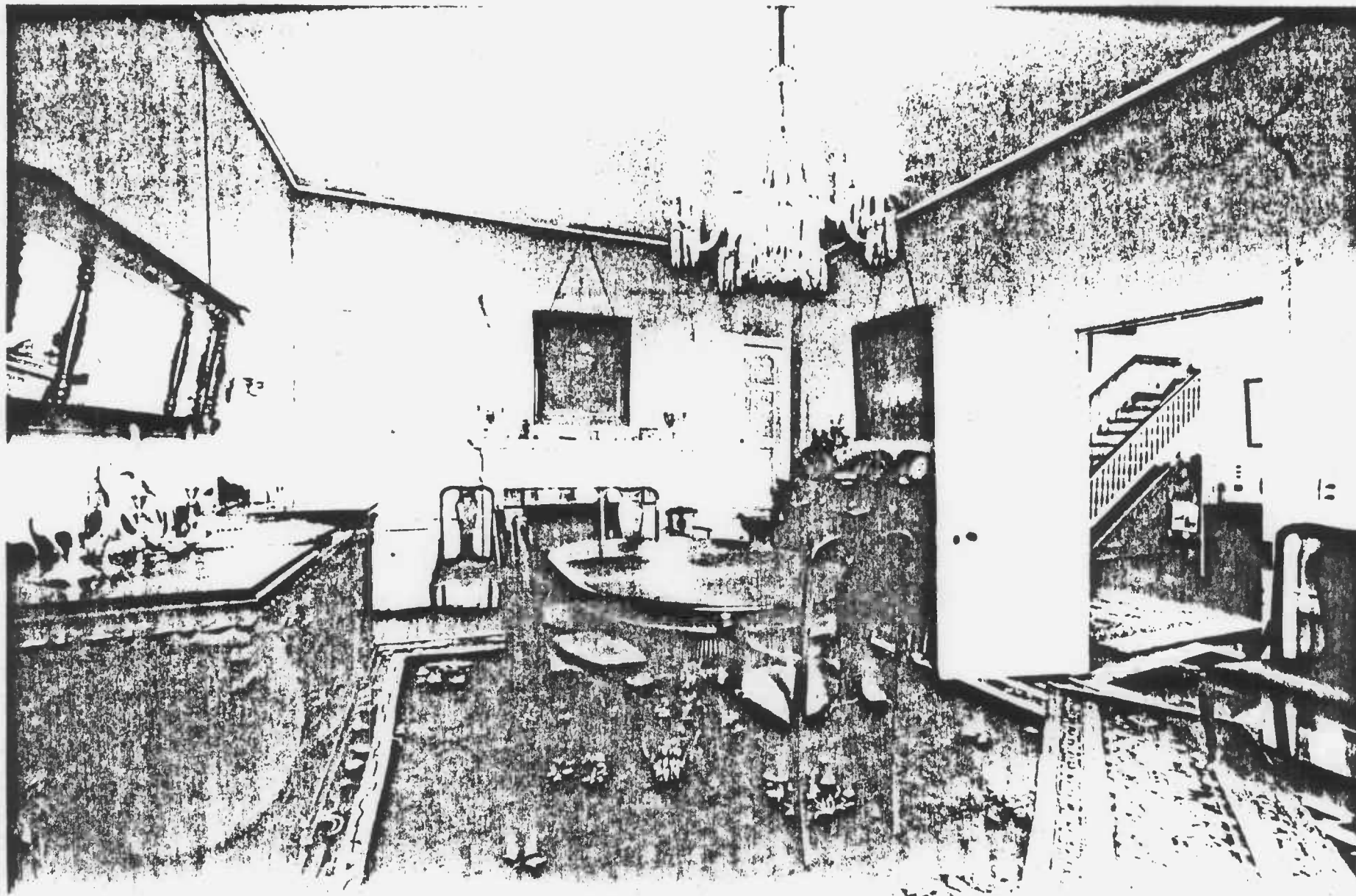
SION HILL  
Harford County, Maryland  
West Facade (Schoolroom and Dormitories)  
Photo by Christopher Weeks, December 1989



SION HILL  
Harford County, Maryland  
First floor center hall, north to south view  
Photo by Jeremy Green, November 1991

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SION HILL  
Harford County, Maryland  
First floor, Northeast Room  
Photo by Jeremy Green, November 1991



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SION HILL

Harford County, Maryland

View south from house toward Chesapeake Bay

Photo by Jeremy Green, November 1991

"NR Form"

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Sion Hillother names/site number HA-525

## 2. Location

street & number 2026 Level Road N/A not for publicationcity, town Havre de Grace X vicinitystate Maryland code MD county Harford code 025 zip code 21078

## 3. Classification

## Ownership of Property

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

## Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

## Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>4</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

3/12/90In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.  
☐ removed from the National Register.  
☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structures  
AGRICULTURAL/agricultural field  
LANDSCAPE

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structures  
AGRICULTURAL/agricultural field  
LANDSCAPE

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian  
Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
walls brick

roof slate  
other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Sion Hill is a three-part brick Georgian/federal house with a superb location at the crest of a long hill whose open fields, and an occasional patch of woods gently slope down to yield panoramic views of the city of Havre de Grace about a mile and a half away, and, just beyond, to that point at which the Susquehanna River broadens out to form the Chesapeake Bay. These expansive vistas are an integral and essential feature of the house, as will be discussed in the Significance Section. The house was begun c. 1785 by John Ireland with the 2 1/2-story, five-bay, gable roof center section as his dwelling flanked by two matching two-story, single-pitched roof wings: the western wing was built as a private boys' academy and the eastern wing was--and--is for service. The house was completed c. 1800 by Gideon Denison and/or his daughter Minerva Denison Rodgers who gave the main facades a richness of period details such as keystoned splayed stone window lintels, and sophisticated architectural treatments unique in Harford County and worthy of urbane centers such as Philadelphia or Georgetown. The grounds contain a vestigial garden (some ancient boxwood, a formal sweep of lawn, several specimen trees) which seems to be contemporaneous with the house. There are two c. 1930 stone outbuildings (a garage and a pump house), a c. 1900 frame barn, and a c. 1800 brick tenant house.

**8. Statement of Significance**

HA-525

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☒ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locallyApplicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Military

Period of Significance

c. 1787- c. 1805

1806-1933

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:**

Sion Hill is of architectural and military significance. Architecturally, Sion Hill, a 1790s Georgian plan house with elegant Georgian and Federal influenced decorative detailing is the finest building known to have been constructed in Harford County in the eighteenth century. It is comparable in its treatment to contemporary structures in more sophisticated urban areas such as Philadelphia or Georgetown, D.C. or Alexandria, Virginia. Important features are the symmetrical central block with flanking wings, Flemish bond facade, with elaborately decorated second floor and attic windows below a modillioned gable, a broad center hall with a pilastered segmental arch, and bold trim and mantels. Militarily, Sion Hill achieves significance as the seat of the Rodgers family which is described in the Dictionary of American Biography as one of the most noted naval families in the United States. Rodgers played leading and vital roles in naval developments from Commodore John Rodgers' (1772-1839) campaigns against the Barbary pirates and service as head of the Board of Navy Commissioners from 1815 until 1825 to Admiral John Rodgers' II (1848-1933), role in the Navy accepting wireless telegraphy, to significant contributions by Commodore John Rodgers (1812-1882) as president of the United States Naval Institute and the first Naval Advisory Board, to pioneer efforts in naval aviation by Commander John Rodgers (1881-1926). Although posted around the world on various assignments, these naval officers resided at Sion Hill. Sion Hill is still owned by the Rodgers family though the surname ended in 1933.

☒ See continuation sheet for  
HISTORIC CONTEXT and MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION PLAN data.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

HA-525

Dictionary of American Biography, Vols. VII and VIII, (New York; Charles Scribner's Sons; Dumas Malone, editor).

C. Milton Wright, Our Harford Heritage, (Bel Air, MD: Privately printed, 1967).

Building by the Book, II, (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1986, Mario di Valmarana, editor).

Land and Probate Records, Harford County Courthouse, Bel Air; Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery Meigs Green.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Harford County, Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD.

☐ See continuation sheet**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # MD 13-Hav.v-2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**creage of property 315 acres more or lessUSGS quad Aberdeen, MD; Havre de Grace, MD**UTM References**

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	403900	4379950
C	18	402550	4379510

	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	18	403770	4378330
D	18	402950	4380490

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**☒ See continuation sheet No. 10.1**Boundary Justification**☒ See continuation sheet No. 10.2**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	Christopher Weeks; Preservation Planner	date	November 1989
organization	Harford County Government	telephone	(301) 879-2000, ext. 207
street & number	220 South Main Street	state	Maryland
city or town	Bel Air	zip code	21014

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Section number 7 Page 7.1

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The 315-acre Sion Hill estate crowns a gentle hill about a mile and a half north of Havre de Grace in eastern Harford County, Maryland. For generations owners of Sion Hill have kept that sweep of ground in open fields and pasture land to yield expansive vistas down to the city and to the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay beyond; these views are and always have been important to the house.

## MAIN HOUSE, c. 1785

The three-part brick mansion was begun c. 1785 by John Ireland, who ran a private boys' academy in the western wing, and used the center block as his main living area; services are in the eastern wing. The Flemish bond brick center block measures five bays across and 2 1/2 stories tall. The main (south and Bay-facing) facade is axial around the entrance door and pedimented porch, a three-part second story window (with an exceptionally elaborate arrangement of pilasters and dentiled and incised entablature), and a lunette (with a delicate keystone) attic window which is centrally placed within a modillioned and pedimented attic gable. This not only

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serves to mark the center of the house and heighten the symmetry, it also accurately suggests the center hall plan within. Side windows, two per floor, are nine-over-nine beneath flared stone lintels with bold keystones. Massive interior end chimneys heighten the overall effect of verticality and impressive grandeur. (The rear or land facade displays the same general theme in a less formal manner, i.e., the center second-story window lacks the three-part enrichment and the attic lunette is slightly simpler.) Both main facades have two-brick high beltcourses.

The flanking wings are two stories tall; they are as deep as the main section and are one bay wide beneath sloping, single-pitched roofs. The wings' roofs' slopes are not as sharp as the main section's but nevertheless visually work well to lead the eye centrally upwards, heightening the monumental effect.

On the interior, the main section has a broad center hall plan; the two largest and most formal rooms (the equal-sized Summer and Winter Dining Rooms) are to the east while two small twin parlors rooms and a stairway are to the west; the mathematics of this scheme are interesting (a three-part composition with one third kept a single unit, one third divided in half, one third divided in thirds) but in a broad context it is a slightly different

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arrangement when compared with some other high-style late 18th-century five-part houses in Maryland which use the "Annapolis Plan"<sup>1</sup>; these would include Wye House in Talbot County and the Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis. The stair is in an open alcove reached from the hall through a segmental and pilastered archway. The stair, entirely original like almost every other feature of the house, rises in four open flights to the attic and has simple, federal balusters, rail, and newel post. The main feature in the hall is the pilastered segmental arch which is identical to the one leading to the stair alcove. Walls are plastered throughout; the plaster is original as is the bountiful amount of high quality and high style woodwork such as chairrail, mantels and over mantels, cornices, panelled doors and hardware, etc. Trim in the Winter Dining Room is particularly notable, as befits the space used for formal entertaining; the elaborate fireplace is not known to have a specific book source for inspiration; the opening is bordered by original blue and white Delft tiles; the entire fireplace is flanked by cabinets, all original.

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1

See Michael F. Trostel, "The Annapolis Plan in Maryland" in Building by the Book, II (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1986; Mario di Valmarana, editor), pp. 1-34.

See Continuation Sheet No. 7.4



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The west wing retains its original spatial configuration (a schoolroom on the ground floor with dormitory cells above) although the schoolroom was remodeled into an informal living room in the 1940s. The east wing is the service wing; originally the larger north room was the pantry and the small south room was the kitchen; the present owners have reversed this arrangement; in addition, the original kitchen led to the Summer Dining Room by means of a small hall; that hall was made into a downstairs powder room. Otherwise, and except for necessary modernizations such as plumbing and electricity, the house is all but entirely unchanged from its c. 1800 appearance. This is doubtless at least partially because it has been owned by the same family since that time.

TENANT HOUSE, c. 1790

Almost certainly cited in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax, this two-story, gable roofed, common bond brick building is located about 200 yards northeast of the main house. It measures three bays by one with a small frame addition on the southern end; there are two rooms per floor. Presumably built at the same time as the main house, the tenant house (servants' quarters) has a brick beltcourse and flat arches over the windows-- surprising touches of enrichment on a utilitarian structure. The six-over-six pegged windows, doors, and plain box cornice all appear to be original.

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GROUNDS

Not surprisingly, Sion Hill was originally set off by elaborate gardens, traces of which remain; original (or very early) plantings include a formal boxwood garden southwest of the house (several ancient bushes remain but the overall design is largely lost), a park-like swath of open grass to the northeast of the house (possibly used for evening walks), and several specimen trees such as beech, holly, magnolia grandiflora, and osage orange. The gardens remain an integral part of the overall design of the estate, although the system of driveways has been changed: originally the driveway circled the house so one arrived at the main (Bay front) facade and a service drive branched off it to lead to the rear facade and kitchen wing; this invited "sightseers" and the present owners took out the drive to the main facade and relaid a driveway to the north facade, which is how one approaches today; the service drive is still in place. The views from the house southward to the Bay are virtually unchanged since c. 1800 and also contribute to the significance of the resource as will be discussed in Section 8. The once formal area around the main house (which has now taken on a rather romantic quality) is separated from the tenant house by a cedar hedge of great age, a rail fence, and a pasture.

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BARN, c. 1900

A variety of farm buildings once stood in the pasture/farmyard between house and tenant house, but they deteriorated and most have been removed. Remaining is a c. 1900 one story plus attic frame barn; it is unused.

GARAGE AND PUMP HOUSE, (2 resources) c. 1930

Nearer the house is a stone garage and a stone pumphouse; both are c. 1930 one-story structures of utilitarian use and design. Robert Rodgers, son of John Augustus and Elizabeth Chambers Rodgers, was the architect.

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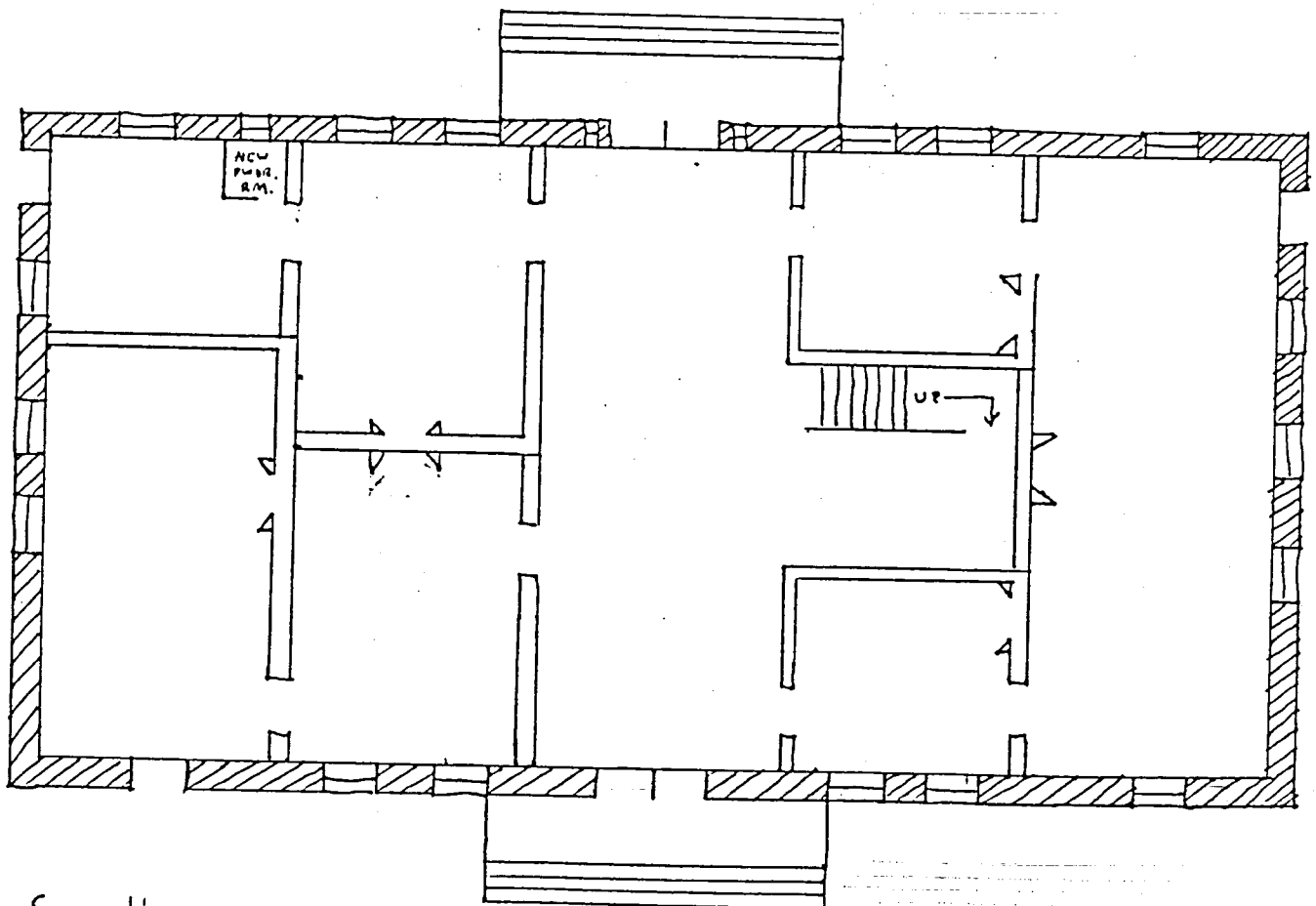
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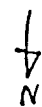
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
(not to scale)

1989



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EXCEPT FOR NEW POWDER ROOM  
ALL INTERIOR WALLS MATCH ORIGINAL



NOT TO SCALE  
C. WEEKS  
Nov. 27, 1989

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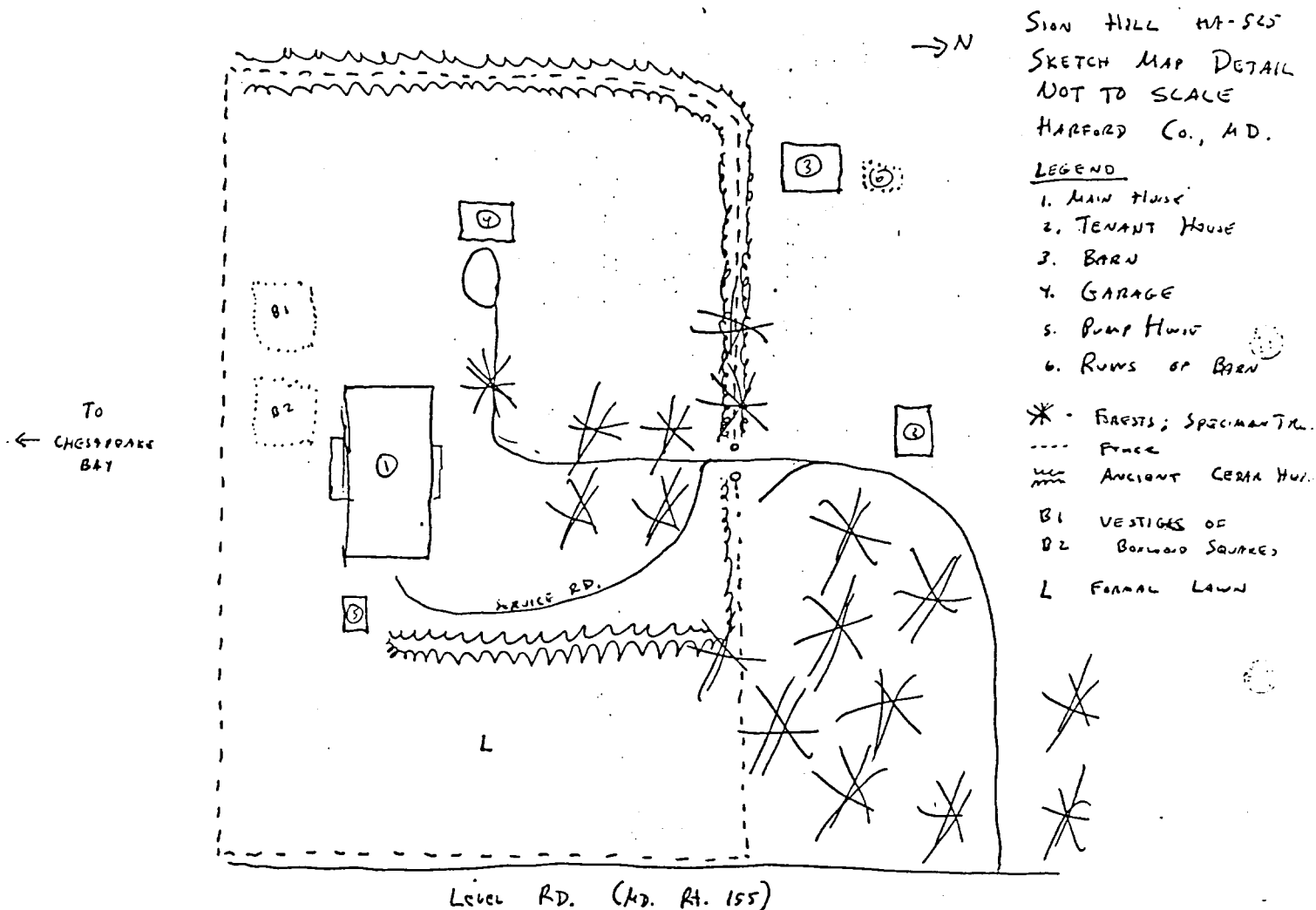
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RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

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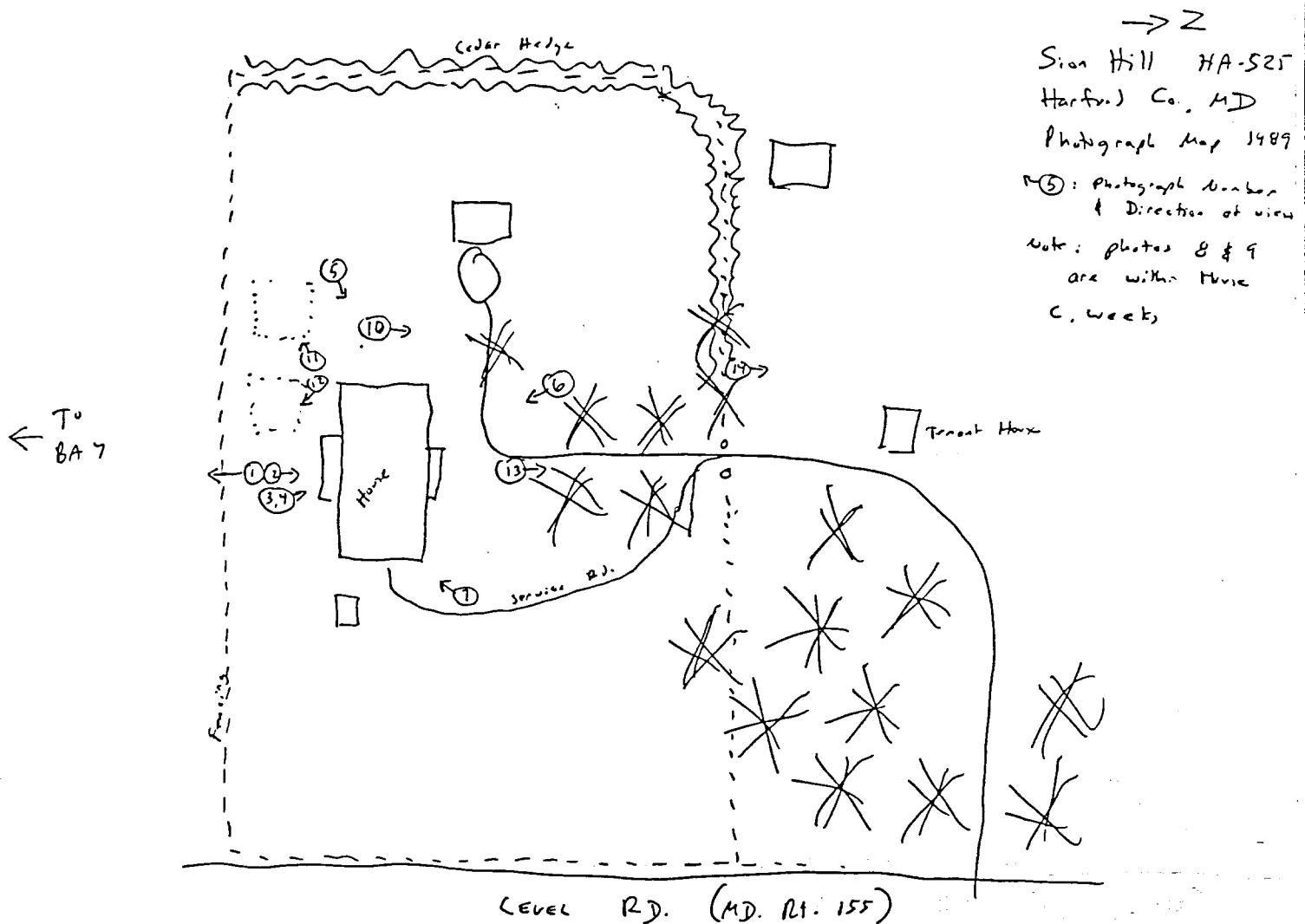
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PHOTOGRAPH MAP



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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Rural Agricultural Intensification 1680-1815

Agricultural-Industrial Transition 1815-1870

Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930

Historic Period Themes:

Architecture, Landscape Architecture

Community Planning

Military

Resource Type:

Category: Buildings

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Functions and Uses:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structures

AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/agricultural buildings

LANDSCAPE

Known Design Sources: None

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Although the history of the land that includes Sion Hill can be traced back to the early 18th century, the tract's importance begins in 1787 when the Rev. John Ireland, rector of St. George's Episcopal Church near Perryman, bought the land<sup>2</sup> and began building the present house. Ireland lived in part of the house and used the western wing as a boys' academy called Sion Hill Seminary.<sup>3</sup> This was in keeping with the practice at St. George's, rectors having maintained schools in Perryman, or at other nearby sites in what is now Harford County, since 1720 and the church is known as "the

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2

Harford County Deed Book JLG K Page 413.

3

C. Milton Wright, Our Harford Heritage, (Bel Air, Maryland: privately Printed, 1967), p. 231.



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mother of church schools." <sup>4</sup> The Seminary appears to have been an immediate success; Dr. John Archer of Medical Hall (HA-2; National Register) attended to the youths' medical needs, according to entries in his ledger; in 1790 it is known that Robert Harris Archer, a son of Dr. Archer's, was a pupil at Sion Hill and studied Latin, French, and mathematics; the same year Ireland took on a <sup>5</sup> "singing master", paying him \$100 "a session" ; in February 1792 Ireland took out a newspaper advertisement in which he stated that <sup>6</sup> "Sion Hill Seminary is now in a very flourishing condition." The present west wing of the house still suggests its school era; the ground floor classroom is still there, although remodelled into an informal living room, and cell-like dormitory rooms are above. Ireland lived in the rest of the house.

It is not certain if the very elegant late Georgian/Federal touches which characterize the present Sion Hill date to Ireland's tenure or to that of Sion Hill's next owner, Gideon Denison, a wealthy

<sup>4</sup> Wright, Harford, p. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Wright, Harford, p. 231.

<sup>6</sup> Clipping in the archives of the Historical Society of Harford County, Bel Air.

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Connecticut merchant whom the Dictionary of American Biography describes as "a descendant of Capt. George Denison, called 'the Miles Standish of Connecticut.'" <sup>7</sup> Gideon Denison bought Sion Hill <sup>8</sup> from Ireland in 1795. Denison is cited in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax as living--"owner and occupant"-- in Sion Hill, described as a "Brick dwelling, two stories, 10 ft. piazza on one side and each end 15 ft. wide, 40 x 42." It is also described as being in an "unfinished state" which is doubtless simply due to the slow construction process at that time. "Owner and occupant" would seem to be the key phrase. One assumes that the "10 ft. piazza" is the south porch and that the fifteen-foot wide one on "each end" are the school and service wings.

Some sources have suggested that Denison "was attracted to Havre de Grace, thinkiig it might be the site for the new national capital" <sup>9</sup> and that he added the elegant and stylish federal period touches. But the District of Columbia had been selected as the site in

<sup>7</sup> Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. VIII, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Dumas Malone, editor), p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Deed JLG M/281.

<sup>9</sup> Undated (probably c. 1965) story on Sion Hill from the AEgis in the Historical Society of Harford County.

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1790. Instead, it might be better to assume that Ireland desired an elegant building for his school--and with good motivation: during his ownership Havre de Grace was given serious consideration as the site of the new Capital City, losing the honor by one vote in 1789. It seems reasonable to think that Ireland would have wanted a stylish location for the leading boys' seminary--complete with a "singing master"-- in what might become the national capital.

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Recent studies have shown that several other property owners in Havre de Grace were sprucing up their houses in the 1780s, but no building in the city (or in the county) even begins to approach the elegant Sion Hill.

For "stylish" and "elegant" are assuredly what Sion Hill is; no other extant building in Harford County displays such a thoroughly complete and correct understanding of period design dicta. Nor is there any evidence that any building ever did. In overall massing and design and in scale and in refinement of stylish details (see description), the house is the finest building of its time in the

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Conversation with Marion Morton Carroll, who prepared the Havre de Grace Historic District Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

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county and is equal to the best of the era's dwellings in more cosmopolitan areas such as Georgetown or Philadelphia.

When Sion Hill was erected, ambitious house-builders in the Chesapeake region favored a five-part plan; one architect/scholar has recently stated that "between roughly 1760 and 1815 the vast majority of the major agrarian manor houses built in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia were five-part houses." <sup>11</sup> Some well-known examples include Kennersley (c. 1790) in Queen Anne's County, Homewood (c. 1801) in what is now Baltimore City, Tudor Place (c. 1815) in Georgetown, Washington, D.C., the Teackle Mansion (1801) in Somerset County, and Wye House (c. 1785) in Talbot County. Sion Hill's three part plan suggests but does not complete the massing of those larger houses. The sloping roofs of Sion Hill's wings effectively terminate the dwelling but do so in a somewhat gentler manner than the five-part houses' customary end pavilions. A few contemporary three-part houses are known to have been built in Maryland, the best-known may be Bachelor's Hope in St. Mary's

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11

Warren J. Cox, "Four Men, the Four Books, and the Five-Part House," in Building by the Book, II, p. 118.

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County (it also has sloping-roofed wings; National Register; dated  
12  
to "between 1753 and 1790").

The facade treatment of Sion Hill also merits some attention. Its use of keystone stone window lintels as a means of (among other things) achieving a lively contrast with the dark red brick would have been desirable in the late 18th century. Among surviving houses, this motif seems more popular in town than in the country and some area townhouses comparable to Sion Hill in this regard include River House (c. 1753) in Chestertown, the Powel House (1765) in Philadelphia, the Neal House (c. 1800) in Easton, and Dumbarton House (begun c. 1800) and some houses in "Cox's Row" (c. 1815, 3327-3339 Prospect Street) in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. The Teackle Mansion is a good extant example of this use of contrasting materials in a semi-country house; it has been called a "magnificent" house, critics taking pains to point out that "the reeded cornice, keystone lintels over the windows...add to the elegant

12

Mark Edwards and Pamela James (eds.), Inventory of Historic Sites in Calvert County, Charles County, and St. Mary's County, (Annapolis: The Maryland Historical Trust, 1980), pp. 114-115.

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13  
appearance of the house." Interestingly, the political/social sites of the two houses (Teackle and Sion Hill) are similar, one being on the edge of a county seat, the other overlooking a city in contention to be the national capital. One might call them suburban.

And perhaps the best context in which to place Sion Hill is as a federal era suburban villa. Evident in several cities (one thinks of villas that formerly lined the Schuylkill and of Gore Place outside Boston), the phenomenon of a town ringed with suburban villas certainly characterized Baltimore c. 1800. For example, the 1801 Warner and Hanna map of the city shows dozens of elegant villas surrounding the growing town; each is often on its own hill-ock; many are set off by formal gardens. One of these, labeled "C. Garts" and placed in the southwest corner of the map, is a three-part villa.

That massing brings up an important point: not only was what Ireland and Denison were doing at Sion Hill (the "Hill" part of the

13

Edward C. Papenfuse et al. (eds.), MARYLAND: A New Guide to the Old Line State, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 189.

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name becomes important) near Havre de Grace similar in spirit to what the Howards and the Carrolls and other prominent Baltimoreans were simultaneously doing, the buildings themselves invite comparison. Actual, physical "comparison" is difficult since documentation is sketchy for most of the Baltimore villas, but one source does yield some insights. The famous Finlay suite of Baltimore painted furniture, made c. 1800-1810 and now at the Baltimore Museum of Art, uses images of several prominent Baltimore structures (generally houses) as decorations. Of them, some closely resemble Sion Hill. Among these, Rose Hill (dated 1798; five bays, 2 1/2 stories, brick with stone--or at least contrasting--keystoned lintels, attic pediment, modillion cornice but no wings), Willow Brook (three parts with what appear to be single-slope-roofed wings, pedimented attic gable but no accented axis and no lintels), and Woodville (five bays, 2 1/2 stories, brick with keystoned lintels, pedimented attic gable) may be the most similar to the Harford County house. In addition, St. Paul's Charity School (dated c. 1800) has some ties as well: it is brick with a pedimented attic gable and although it lacks lintels it does have a beltcourse; it is further related in that both it and Sion Hill have exteriors marked by a strong central axis defined by three-part motifs such as modified Palladian windows. Some of the larger houses shown on the furniture share some design features

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with Sion Hill (Bolton, c. 1800, for instance, is brick with an attic gable and keystone windows) but in general are more ambitious than the Havre de Grace villa. (It is sadly ironic to observe that by 1869 the once very grand and elaborate Mount Clare had apparently been reduced to three parts, based on its appearance on the 1869 Sachse map of Baltimore in the lobby of the Maryland Historical Society.) Unfortunately, except for Mount Clare none of above-cited Baltimore villas exists.

A similar phenomenon was taking place at the same time around the new "Capital City" of Washington: extant examples include Tudor Place (c. 1815), Dumbarton House, Evermay (1801), and Prospect House (c. 1788) in Georgetown, the Octagon House (c. 1800 in Washington) and Riversdale (c. 1801 in Prince George's County).

All this is not to suggest that Sion Hill influenced or was influenced by the Baltimore or Washington villas; it is merely to point out that they seem to be products of the same ethos. They were all elegant villas built on the edges of growing cities; in the case of Willow Brook et al., on the edge of a booming port city; in the case of Sion Hill, on the edge of what was hoped would become the national capital; in the case of Tudor Place et al., on the edge of what was the national capital.



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Moreover, Tudor Place, Mount Clare, and Sion Hill are all elegant villas which enjoy extensive views. And there may be some precedent for it: in describing the site of his Villa Rotonda, Palladio went into lengthy detail in his Four Books to point out that the Rotonda is a "country-house upon a hill, less than a quarter mile distant from the city" with a "site [which] is as pleasant and as delightful as can be found; because it is upon a small hill...and is watered on one side by the Bacchiglione...and on the other it is encompassed with most pleasant risings, which look like a very great theater...it enjoys from every part most beautiful views, some of which are limited, some more extended, and others that terminate with the horizon."

It is unlikely that Ireland or Denison or the Rodgerses actually used I Quattro Libri at Sion Hill (their thorough Estate Inventories don't list a copy) but it is certain that Palladian ideals were "in the air" among the wealthy of the Chesapeake region at the time, ideals which caused sophisticated people like Ireland here or the Peters (at Tudor Place) or the Carrolls (at Mount Clare) to abandon the practice common in rural areas of placing a farmhouse below the crest of a hill (where it would be sheltered from winds) and to follow Palladio ("it seems not improper to say something concerning the situation") who argued that the ideal site

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for a villa was "upon elevated and cheerful places, where the air is, by the continual blowing of the wind, moved." (In fact Palladio actually argued against sheltering houses "in valleys...because edifices in valleys are hid, and are deprived of seeing at a distance, and...are without dignity and grandeur.")

Further, at Sion Hill the views from the house to that important body of water, the Chesapeake, seem linked to the history of the family most connected with the house, the Rodgerses; John Rodgers in the War of 1812 won one of his greatest victories on the Chesapeake--it was the defence of Baltimore from the British and the entire family has been called collectively "the most noted of American naval families" as will be discussed below.

To return to Denison: he was also assessed, in 1798, for several outbuildings including a "brick dwelling 1 1/2 stories, 33 by 23, no inside work" (which is probably the present tenant house) as well as a "carriage house, 18 x 16, wood" a "Necessary and Poultry House" and a "wood corn house, 22 x 9". Three tenant dwellings (no dimensions) and four tenants are listed. In all in 1798, Sion Hill with its 1820 acres, buildings, and 12 slaves was appraised at \$7,756.50.

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Denison died in 1799. Although his Estate Inventory contains a thorough appraisal, it was not done on a room by room basis making it is impossible to compare the present house with what Denison was living in. It is clear, however, that he was living in grand style for the Inventory lists the sort of furniture (several pairs of gilt looking glasses, gallons of imported wines, and dozens of mahagony and walnut pieces) one associates with upper class life at the time. Further, there is enough archival material to suggest what a flourishing merchant Denison was. His administrator listed various debts due the estate and these reveal far-flung enterprises (although of an indefinite nature): one man in Tennessee owed Denison \$1411.99; a note "endorsed by Talbot of Connecticut and [unreadable] of N. York" was worth \$1516; a note payable in Savannah was worth \$86.69 and "other papers to collect in Georgia" were worth \$474; the estate actually received \$894 from one George Howell of Boston and "on account of goods sent from Knoxville to Natchez the exact amount of which cannot be ascertained but it appears to be about \$15,000." These and other similar entries<sup>14</sup> totalled \$29,510.71.

14

Material in the Orphans' Court of Harford County, Bel Air.

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It is certainly likely that Sion Hill, even though it was in an "unfinished state" in 1798, would have been nearing its present completed state when Gideon Denison's daughter, Minerva (1774-1877), married John Rodgers (1772-1839) in the north parlor of the house on October 21, 1806. That event marks the beginning of the house's period of military significance. Minerva would inherit Sion Hill, and the Rodgerses made it their home throughout the years when John was earning himself the nickname "Father of the American Navy."

John Rodgers was a son of the Colonel John Rodgers who operated Rodger's Tavern (National Register), ran the important ferryline across the Susquehanna between Havre de Grace and Perryville, and, according to the Dictionary of American Biography, was the "founder<sup>15</sup> of the most noted of American naval families" --a significant value judgement for the normally cautious DAB. (Several of the naval John Rodgers's siblings also wed well: one sister, Maria Ann, married noted attorney William Pinkney and another, Mary, married Howes Goldsborough.)

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<sup>15</sup>  
DAB, p. 75.

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The only complete history of Harford County succinctly observes that "among the sons of Harford...there are none due greater honor<sup>16</sup> than the members of the Rodgers family" and the honors begin in earnest with Commodore John Rodgers. John was educated at home; "through his reading of books about the sea [he] received an impress that determined his career"<sup>17</sup> He entered the infant U.S. Navy in 1798 and was made a First Lieutenant on the frigate Constellation; in 1799 he was promoted to the rank of Captain, "the first lieutenant in the navy under the Constitution to be advanced<sup>18</sup> to this rank" and placed in chage of the sloop Maryland cruising first in the West Indies and then in the Mediterranean.

In 1805, the year before he married Minerva Denison, he was placed in command of the entire American squadron in the Mediterranean; during the wars with the Barbary Pirates from 1802-06, Rodgers wrecked havoc on the enemy, destroying ships and in general "playing a part exceeded in importance by that of no other naval officer...his conduct was cordially approved of by the secretary of

<sup>16</sup>  
Wright, Harford, p. 416.

<sup>17</sup>  
DAB, p. 76.

<sup>18</sup>  
DAB, p. 76.

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the navy and the president and he was hailed and toasted as a  
19 popular hero." He also "forced Tripoli to sign a treaty to end  
20 slavery of Christians" in 1805. For his many and varied accom-  
plishments Rodgers was made Commodore (then the highest rank in the  
navy) and was placed in command of the naval flagship President. In  
July 1807 he was made commander of the "New York Flotilla and naval  
station...the most important office at the disposal of the naval  
21 department."

By 1812 he was Chief Commander of the entire American fleet the  
22 "ranking officer in active service"; after war broke out, in  
1812-'13 he fought (and won) several engagements with the British  
navy in the Carribean and in the North Sea where he raided the  
coast of Scotland. Scholars have determined that of all the  
American naval officers at the time, "he understood best the

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19  
DAB, p. 76.

20  
Who Was Who Historical Volume 1607-1896, (Chicago: A.N. Marquis, Co.,  
1943), p. 451.

21  
DAB, p. 76.

22  
DAB, p. 76.

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principles of naval strategy." After the British burned Washing-  
ton and moved on Baltimore in 1813, Rodgers "saved Baltimore from  
attack by obstructing the channel, sinking vessels for that  
24  
purpose."

Rodgers retired from active service in 1815 and returned to Sion  
Hill, although he did serve as President of the Board of Navy  
Commissioners from 1815 until 1825; that body "ranked next to the  
members of the cabinet in the administrative hierarchy of  
25  
Washington." He died of cholera in 1838. (Rodgers was not only a  
war hero, he was punctilious in the extreme in his business life;  
in his Last Will and Testament he left his "beloved wife Minerva,  
all and Singular the Estate real, personal, and mixed of which I  
may die possessed" but took the trouble to remind her to pay his  
debts including one "due to Mr. Bennett of Georgetown of 15c" as  
well as three "small debts" to three grocers and "a small sum due  
26  
[unreadable], apothecary.")

23  
DAB, p. 77.

24  
Wright, Harford, p. 417.

25  
DAB, p. 77.

26  
Harford County Will WSR9/281.

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In 1841 Minerva Rodgers gave 1800 acres and Sion Hill to a son,  
<sup>27</sup>  
Robert Smith Rodgers, and moved to Washington, D.C., where she  
lived in a house on Lafayette Square. While in the District, Louisa  
Rodgers, one of Minerva's and John's daughters, met and married  
Montgomery C. Meigs, future Quartermaster General of the Union Army  
in the Civil War and builder of such well-known Washington  
landmarks as the Pension Building; it is from this marriage that  
the present owner of Sion Hill is descended.

Minerva Rodgers lived on until 1877; in her Will--she identifies  
herself in that document as "the widow of the late Commodore John  
Rodgers"-- she left \$20,000 cash bequests to each of several  
children ("that being the price of the house in LaFayette Square") .  
and then set up a complicated Trust for the benefit of her children  
and grandchildren, with her son Commodore John Rodgers and  
son-in-law "General M.C. Meigs of the U.S. Army" to manage it.  
Excluded as a beneficiary of the Trust was "my son Robert, [he]  
having received the Gift of the Farm in Maryland called Sion  
<sup>28</sup>  
Hill."

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<sup>27</sup>  
Deed HDG35/225.

<sup>28</sup>  
Will WSR9/283.



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Robert Smith Rodgers was born (1809) and died (1891) at Sion Hill. He chose to serve his country in the army; after earning his degree in engineering at the University of Pennsylvania "from 1830 to 1841 he served as an assistant civil engineer in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Enlisting as a private in the United States Army at the beginning of the Civil War, he was soon promoted to the rank of Colonel and was engaged chiefly in the battles of the Shenandoah Valley."

But the navy maintained its formidable presence at Sion Hill: in 1841 (the year he received Sion Hill and the year he retired from the surveying business) Robert Rodgers married Sarah Perry, daughter of Commander Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) thereby creating a most impressive naval union. Interestingly, as a youth of 16--long before he was chosen in 1852 to "open" Japan, "the most important diplomatic mission ever entrusted to an American naval officer -- Matthew Perry had served under Commodore John Rodgers during the wars with the Barbary pirates on the President; Perry was much influenced by his commanding officer, for "John Rodgers

29  
Wright, Harford, p. 418.

30  
DAB, Vol VII, p. 488.

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[was] a bluff disciplinarian who stamped many of his qualities upon  
the young subaltern."<sup>31</sup>

Connections between America's two premier naval families continued when Ann Maria Perry, sister of Matthew and Oliver Hazard, married George Washington Rodgers (1787-1832), a younger brother of Commodore John. The family's nautical contributions continued in that cadet branch, too, for G.W. Rodgers fought in the Barbary wars and in the War of 1812; "Congress recognized his services by voting him a silver medal and his native state rewarded him by giving him  
a sword."<sup>32</sup> George Washington Rodgers and Ann Maria Perry Rodgers had a son, Christopher, who was Superintendent of the Naval Academy from 1877-78 and then served as commander in chief of the Pacific squadron from 1878-80. "Several [of their sons] reached the highest  
naval rank."<sup>33</sup> An astonishing quantity of Perry memorabilia (prints and furniture from Japan as well as uniforms, a dispatch box, portraits, etc.) still fills Sion Hill.

<sup>31</sup>  
DAB VII, p. 487.

<sup>32</sup>  
DAB, p. 73.

<sup>33</sup>  
DAB, p. 74.

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If Robert S. Rodgers was an agriculturalist and--inexplicably--an army man, his brother, Commodore John Rodgers, II, (1812-1882) continued the Rodgerses' naval traditions. Born at Sion Hill, he entered the Naval Academy in 1828 (after a year at the University of Virginia), was graduated and saw duty in the Mediterranean and in the Seminole War; promoted to Lieutenant, from 1842-1860 he "was in charge of vessels on surveying expeditions in the Mediterranean, North Pacific, and Arctic Ocean." In 1852 "he succeeded Commander Cadwalader Ringgold as commander of the North Pacific Exploring and Surveying Expedition", sailing into the Arctic Ocean "where he explored unknown regions and obtained information that corrected<sup>34</sup> the Admiralty's charts."

He started his service in the Civil War with the rank of Commander, but Lincoln had him promoted to rank of Commodore, citing the "zeal, bravery, and good conduct" so characteristic of the family. Serving under Admiral duPont, John Rodgers, II, was honored by being allowed to "hoist the first American flag on the rebellious soil of South Carolina." After the war, he was Commandant first at the Boston Navy Yard (1866-'69) and at the Mare Island Navy Yard (1873-'77) in California. In the interim, he was sent to the Pacific in 1871 to attempt to negotiate a treaty with Korea. (He.

<sup>34</sup>  
DAB, p. 78.

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was unsuccessful.) Rodgers was president of the Naval Examining and Retiring boards, 1872-73; commandant of the Mare Island navy yard, 1873-77; superintendent of the Naval Observatory, 1877-82; and chairman of the Light-house Board, 1878-82. He secured for the observatory its present site and made certain its reconstruction on more ample lines. In the last years of his life his eminence led to his selection as president of the United States Naval Institute, of the Transit of Venus Commission, of the First Naval Advisory Board, from which dates the new navy, and of the Jeannette Relief Board.<sup>35</sup> At his death he was "the senior Rear Admiral on the active list."<sup>36</sup>

John Rodgers, II, contributed much to the navy and so, too, did his nephew, Robert S. and Sarah Perry Rodgers' son, John Augustus Rodgers. Born at Sion Hill in 1848, he entered the Naval Academy in 1863, eventually seeing duty in "European, Asiatic, and home waters."<sup>37</sup> During the Spanish-American War, he was executive officer of the U.S.S. Indiana, being advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral "for eminent conduct in battle."<sup>38</sup> In 1904 Admiral Rodgers was among the few navy men with vision enough to push for use of wireless telegraphy: he chaired and eventually convinced a

<sup>35</sup>  
DAB, p. 78.

<sup>36</sup>  
Wright, Harford, p. 418.

<sup>37</sup>  
Wright, Harford, p. 419.

<sup>38</sup>  
Wright, Harford, p. 419.

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committee to adopt that invention. In 1910 he retired from active duty to teach at Harvard and at the Institute of Naval Technology. He died at Sion Hill in 1933 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Admiral Rodgers married Elizabeth Chambers and they had three sons. Alexander, following his father's role, was an explorer.

(Unfortunately he was lost and presumably died in the Yukon.)

Robert was an architect who designed a pump house and a garage for his parents. (He died a bachelor.) There was also Commander John Rodgers (1881-1926). By a quirk, he was born in Washington, D.C., not at Sion Hill and the compilers of the Dictionary of American Biography were quick to note this oddity and to point out that "the  
39  
Rodgers' home was at Havre de Grace, Maryland." Educated at

Lawrenceville and at the Naval Academy (from which he was graduated in 1903), the young Rodgers saw action "during the World War...in  
40  
the submarine service and on North Sea mine barrage duty."

Commander Rodgers was just as interested in new technology as his father Admiral Rodgers had been: the senior Rodgers advocated use

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<sup>39</sup>  
DAB, p. 79.

<sup>40</sup>  
DAB, p. 79.

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of the telegraph; the younger Rodgers pioneered naval aviation. He was just the second American naval officer to be licensed as an aviator and from 1922 until 1925 he was "commander of the Naval Air<sup>41</sup> Station, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii". In 1925, while he and four other men were flying back to Hawaii after a trip to San Francisco, their plane crashed in the Pacific 400 miles short of their goal. After floating at sea for several days Rodgers was rescued and was then given a desk job as Chief of the Bureau of Naval Aeronautics, "in recognition of his sterling qualities as an aviator and his ability<sup>42</sup> as a seaman and navigator." But this did not suit his personality and he resigned in 1926 to resume flying and experimenting. That August, he was placed in command of a "new scouting seaplane squadron created for experimental purposes at San<sup>43</sup> Diego." After 11 days in San Diego, Rodgers was piloting a plane to Philadelphia, when it crashed in the Delaware River and killed him.

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<sup>41</sup>  
DAB, p. 79.

<sup>42</sup>  
DAB, p. 79.

<sup>43</sup>  
DAB, p. 79.

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Commander Rodgers had no children, thus 1933, the year his father, Admiral Rodgers, died, might serve to mark the end of Sion Hill's period of significance if for no other reason than that future owners have not borne the Rodgers surname--although these owners are all descendents of Commodore John Rodgers, I, and have all continued the naval traditions of their forebears.

These owners, moreover, have been always aware of how important the spirit of the first John Rodgers is to Sion Hill, and have kept the house and farm going almost as a memorial to him. For instance, the Last Will and Testament of Elizabeth Chambers Rodgers (the flying Rodgers's mother and Admiral Rodgers's widow), probated in 1944 takes a good deal of trouble to explain how she chose to "dispose of my estate known as Sion Hill...inherited by me from my late husband." Continuing, "I intend to make such disposition as, in my opinion, will most fully assure the indefinite continuance of the premises in the possession and control of a descendant of John Rodgers." To this end, she left Sion Hill to her nephew, John Meigs; he, in turn, passed the property to its present owner, <sup>44</sup>Montgomery Meigs Green, in 1946. Somewhat miraculously, these

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44

Deed GCB298/235.

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later owners have been able to fulfil Elizabeth Chambers Rodgers's wishes and Sion Hill--mansion and outbuildings, gardens and Bay vistas--remains nearly unchanged since John and Minerva Rodgerses' day, an intact reminder of the 140 years when it was the seat of "the most noted of American naval families."



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Continuation Sheet

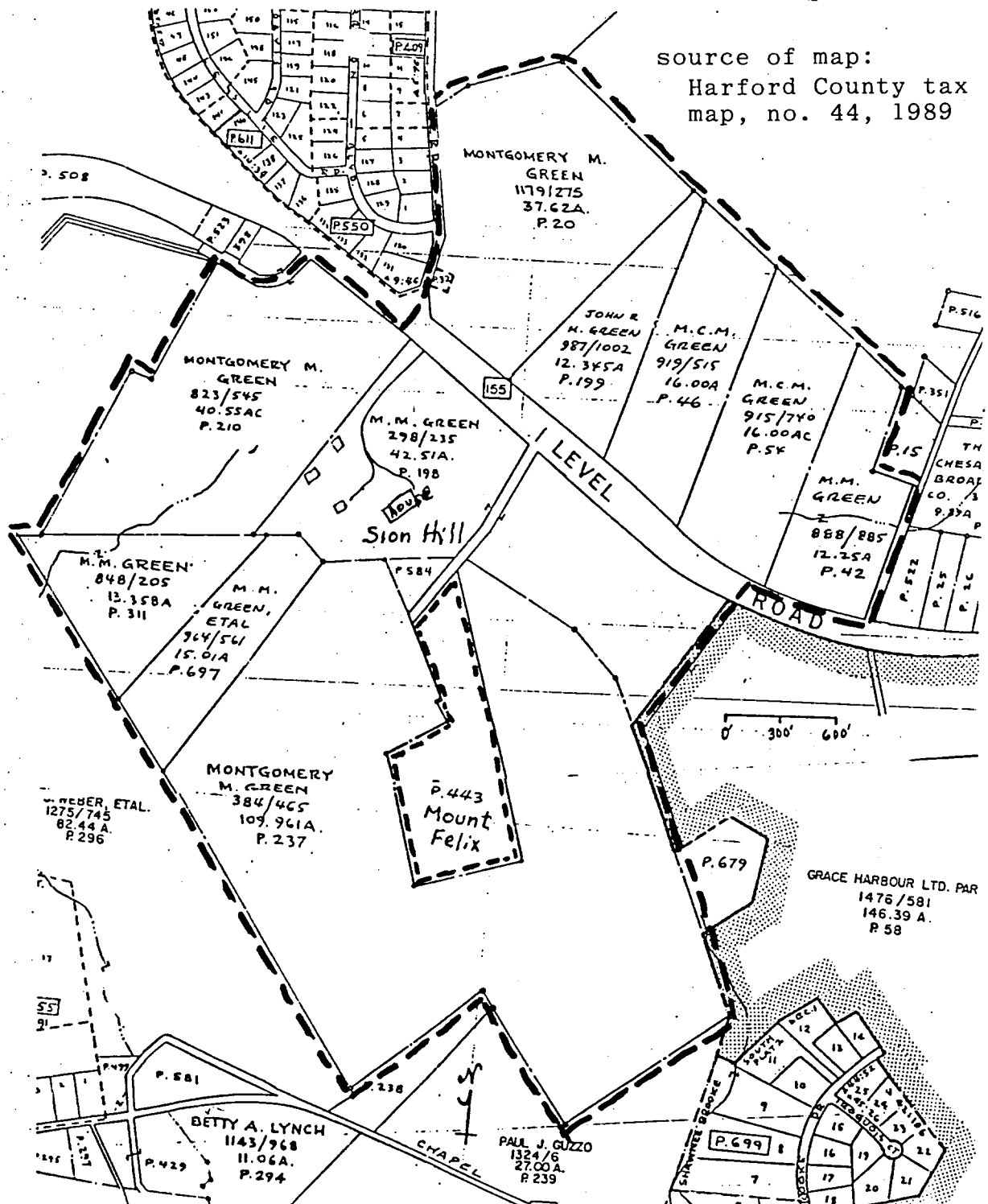
Sion Hill  
Harford County  
Maryland

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The property consists of the parcels encircled by the broken line but excluding the Mount Felix property, parcel 443.

source of map:  
Harford County tax  
map, no. 44, 1989



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## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The 315 acres included in this nomination constitutes all the land which has descended in family ownership with the house. It represents the full extent of the land directly associated with the resource during the periods and areas of significance. Although the present-day tax assessment maps for Harford County illustrate the property as being divided into multiple parcels, the property is visually one unit with the complex of resources standing on only parcel number 198. The remaining parcels are undeveloped with standing structures but are a part of the grounds and setting addressed in the significance section. Physically surrounded by the Sion Hill property but intentionally and expressly excluded from the nomination is the property called Mount Felix, parcel number 443 on the boundary map. The history of Mount Felix is separate and different from that of Sion Hill. Mount Felix was developed in the mid-nineteenth century on land acquired from the Rodgers family but not by the Rodgers family. No resources associated with Sion Hill are located on the Mount Felix property. As Mount Felix is distinctly separate historically from Sion Hill and physically concentrated in a clearly defined and physically non-intrusive area, the decision was made to exclude the property entirely rather than include it and mark it as non-contributing.

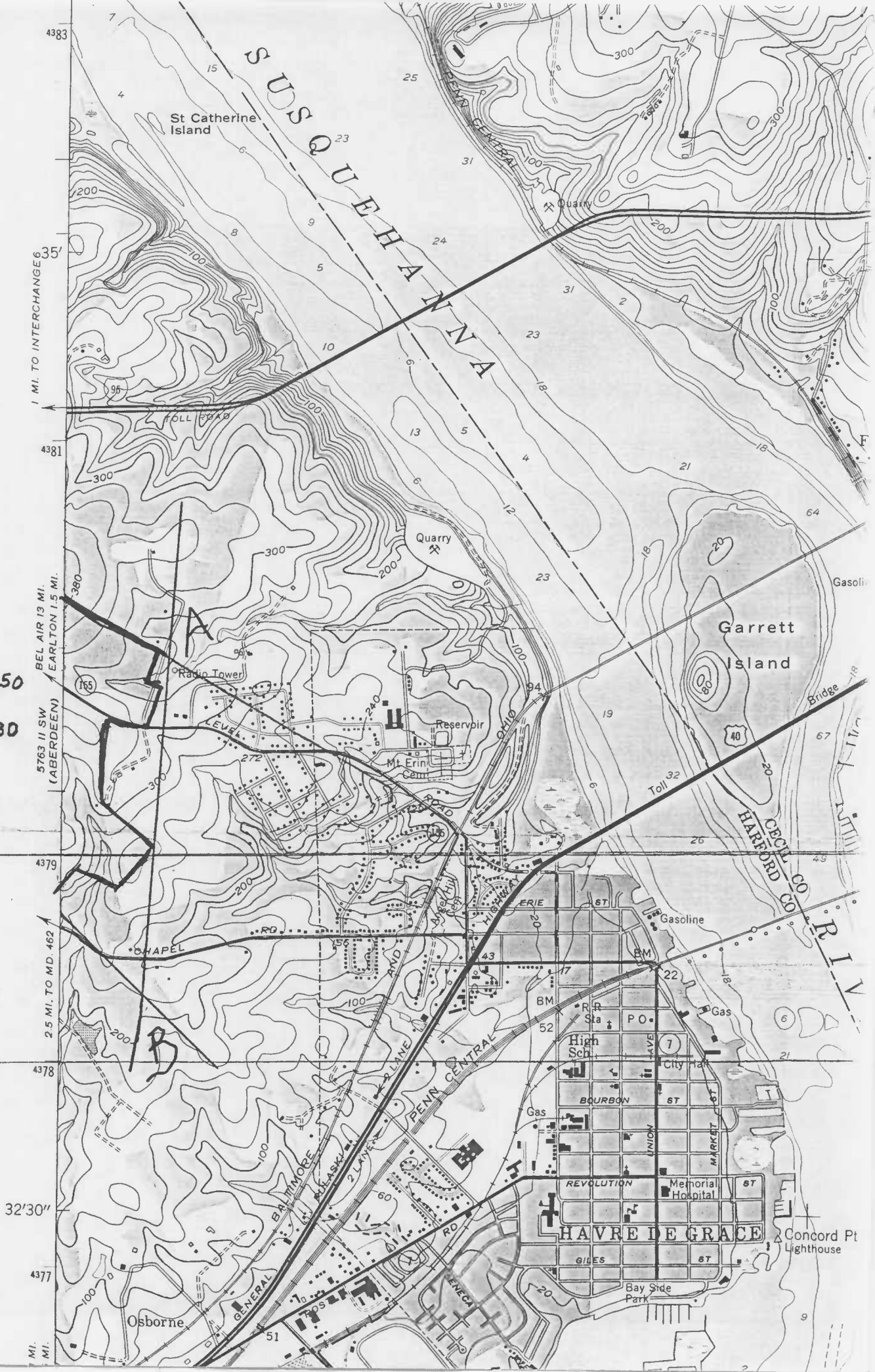
Sion Hill  
HA-525

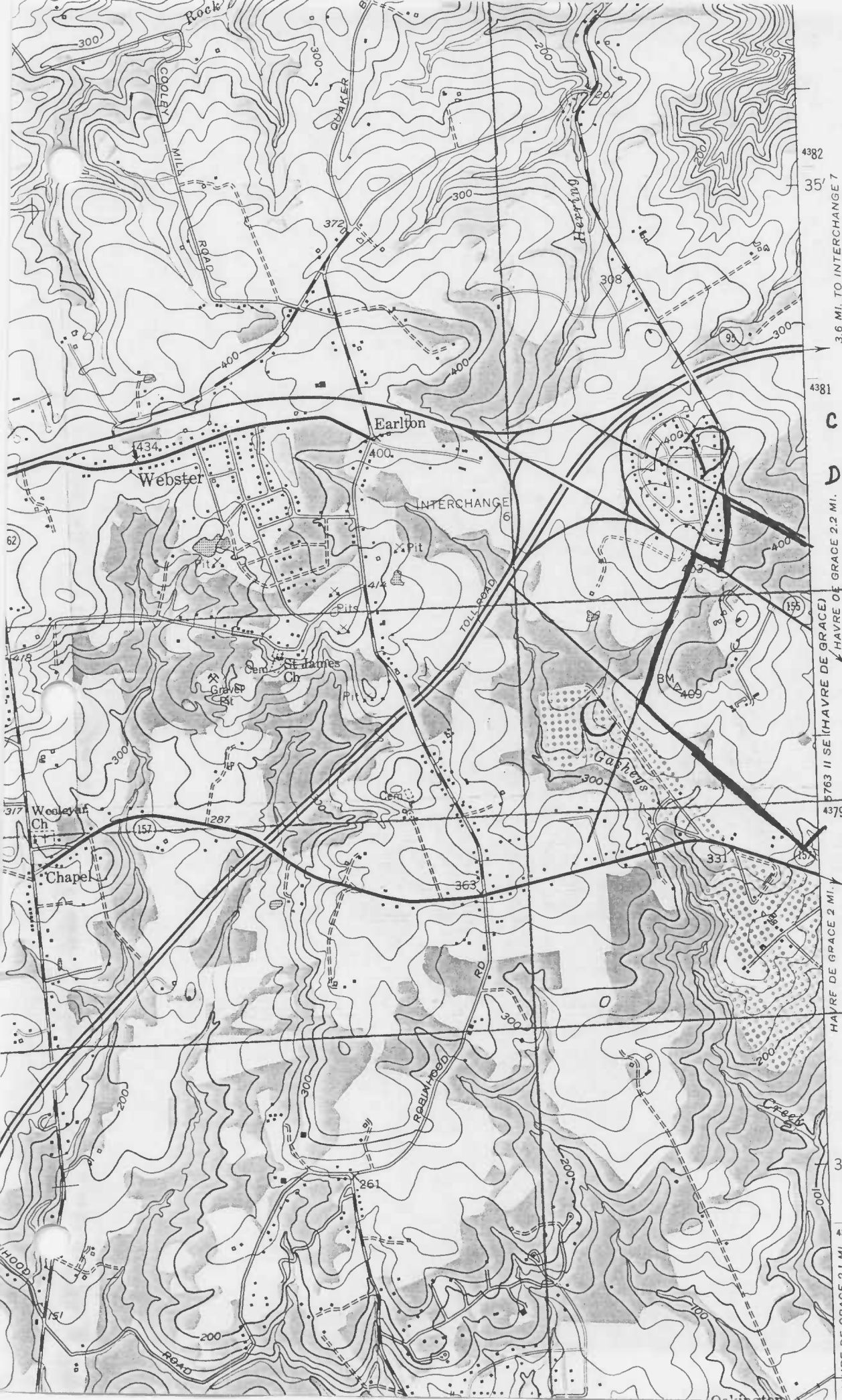
Harford Co.  
Maryland

map 1

A 17/13900/4379950

B 18/403770/4378330





Sion Hill  
HA-525  
Harford Co.  
Maryland

map 2

C 18/402550/4379510

D18/402950/4380490

3.6 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 7  
4382  
35'  
4381  
5763 II SE (HAVRE DE GRACE)  
4379  
HAVRE DE GRACE 2.2 MI.  
HAVRE DE GRACE 2 MI.  
32'30"  
4377  
HAVRE DE GRACE 2.1 MI.  
ELKTON 17 MI.

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Sion Hill

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Level Road

CITY, TOWN

Havre de Grace

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT  
☐ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☒ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Montgomery M. Green

Telephone #: 939-4386

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Sion Hill Farm

CITY, TOWN

Havre de Grace

— VICINITY OF

Maryland

STATE, zip code

21078

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: GRG 823  
Folio #: 545

STREET &amp; NUMBER

40 S. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This house commands a magnificent view of the Susquehanna River's juncture with the upper Chesapeake Bay. The house is two-story, on a stone foundation, with walls of Flemish bond brick. A belt course runs the perimeter of the building between the first and second levels, and a water table extends the length of the eastern exposure. The main house is five bays by one, with three bay-wide, one bay-deep shed additions of the same material appearing on the northern and southern extremes. The main section's windows are massive 9 X 9's with window caps of white stone with center key-stones. The frames are pegged. The wings possess less ornate 3 X 6 sashes. This house features a central pavillion containing the portals; on the eastern and western facades. Separated Palladian windows are found on each, although the eastern pavillion's is much more elaborate (see drawings). The eastern entrance is double and features a triangular pediment and three-light sidelights. The western door is also pedimented and is capped with a three-light transom. Single ingresses to either of the wings are also stationed on their western elevations. The roof is gable-flank and slate, with a rather elaborate cornice pattern. Both the eastern and the western sides have friezes with dentils and architrave trim, but only the eastern embrasure has modillions above the dentils. Curtain chimneys with tile caps are located on the flush-ends of the northern and southern gable-ends.

### The Interior- Information provided by David Hill

The main section of the house possesses a thru-hall with two rooms on either side of it. It is interesting that the staircases are set off from the hall proper. The first floor contains no less than eight fireplaces, six of them in pairs. The walls are plastered, with chair rails, and the doors consist of twin sunken panels with original hardware.

### The Tenant House

This small brick building is west of the main house and is two-story and brick (Common bond), with a small frame shed addition on the southern side. The building itself faces east, measuring three bays by one, and sits upon a low stone foundation. A double row of stretchers form a belt course that travel the entire length of the walls between the first and second stories, and flat brick arches are above the first floor's apertures. On the northern and southern gable ends are geometrically-patterned vents, i.e., where the headers have been removed. The window sashes are 6 X 6, trimmed with plank shutters, and single doors are located in both the frame and the brick sections along the eastern facade. The doors to the main section consist of six moulded patterns. The roof is a slate gable-flank, trimmed with a box cornice. A single brick corbeled stack is located west of the ridgeline on the interior of the roof.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
----------------	-------------------

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

This house possesses so many features typical of late Georgian architecture of the 1760-1780 period. The land was patented by Samuel Howell, a 1726 vestryman of the Spesutia Church who left the property to his daughter Arabilla. She married Micajah Mitchell, who in turn devised the tract to Jacob Giles in 1780. Giles' heirs conveyed the tract, called Rich Level, to Rev. John Ireland in 1789. Ireland served as the rector of St. George's Parish in Ferryman from 1787 until 1792, and was the husband of Joanna Giles. He opened an academy at Sion Hill, christened after the Duke of Northumberland's ancestral home in the minister's native England, in 1792, and it operated until around 1796. Dr. John Archer was the school physician, and a 1792 Baltimore newspaper article reported the school to be flourishing. Dr. Robert Archer, son of Dr. John Archer, was a pupil there in 1790, and some of the courses offered there included mathematics, Latin, French, music and education. In 1795, Gideon Denison acquired the tract from Ireland, who went on to be the associate rector at St. Paul's in Baltimore from 1796 until 1802. Denison was a very wealthy man who probably erected the existing house, as the 1798 Tax List indicates that his two-story brick house was unfinished. Also mentioned are three tenant houses, a second brick structure of 1½ stories and frame poultry, corn and carriage buildings. The 1795 Hardecœur Map also acknowledges Denison's ownership of the place. Denison's daughter, Minerva, married John Rodgers in 1806 and they took residence at Sion Hill, although it was owned at that time by Jerusha Denison.

Rodgers was born in 1771, the son of a Scottish immigrant who had served in the Revolutionary War. He entered the naval service in 1798, and was first assigned as the First Lieutenant of the frigate Constellation. He received his first command, the sloop Maryland, in 1799, and he patrolled the West Indies in that year. From there, Rodgers, commanding the sloop John Adams, was transferred to the Mediterranean and rose to the command of the American squadron there. In action against the Barbary pirates in 1805, his flagship Constitution destroyed an enemy warship and helped to bring the Bey of Tunis to terms. For this he was promoted to Commodore and placed in command of the fleet flagship President, being Admiral of the Fleet in 1812. In May of that year, before war was declared, Rodgers encountered the H.M. Sloop Little Belt and inflicted heavy damage upon her. In June, after hostilities formally commenced, Rodgers pursued a British convoy with the bulk of the American fleet, and after a short kirmish where Rodgers personally fired the first shot, he was wounded.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See attached sheet

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 40.556

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The tract is located on the south side of Maryland Route #155, about 0.2 miles from the intersection with Interstate Route 95. It is fronted to the north by Route 155 and to the east by Mt. Felix Farm.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Paul L. Penrod / Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

DATE

October 20, 1976

TELEPHONE

267-1212

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



## SION HILL

He failed to overtake the convoy, but did take seven prizes. The Commodore patrolled the Scottish coast on a raiding cruise in 1812-1813. Rodgers was in Philadelphia in August of 1814, when the British launched their campaign to take Baltimore and Washington, and he hurried to Baltimore with 300 seamen to help in the organization of the city's defense. The naval officer positioned gun batteries and sunk blockships to close off the harbor. Following the encounters at North Point and Ft. McHenry, he attempted an unsuccessful raid on the British forces in the lower Potomac with small craft. After the war, Rodgers served as the President of the Board of Naval Commissioners from 1815 until 1825, when he was briefly recalled to command the Mediterranean squadron. He died in Philadelphia in 1838. Minerva Rodgers was also involved in the War of 1812, as she tried to persuade the British of Admiral Cockburn's forces to spare Havre de Grace from the torch in 1813.

Minerva outlived her husband by over thirty years and she was entrusted with the house in 1841, receiving it from her brother, Jerusha Denison. The Rodgers and their descendants would own the house until 1946. John Rodgers had several children were also quite prominent in their time. One daughter married General Montgomery Meigs, later to become Quartermaster-General of the Union Army.

There was also Commodore John Rodgers II, born at Sion Hill in 1812. He was appointed to Annapolis in 1828, and served aboard the Constellation and the Concord. The younger Rodgers surveyed the Florida coast and participated in the Seminole War. He commanded the warships Jefferson and Wave during 1829-1831. Promoted to Lieutenant in 1840, he surveyed the Northern Pacific, the Arctic and the Mediterranean from 1842 until 1860. Rodgers was appointed to the rank of Commander in 1855 and served as a special service officer during the Civil War. From 1866 until 1869 he held the post of the commander of the Boston Navy Yard and he was also superintendent of the Mare Island facility from 1873 until 1877, when he died in 1882, John Rodgers II was the senior Rear Admiral.

Colonel Robert S. Rodgers was born at Sion Hill in 1809, and later entered the military academy in Middletown, Connecticut. He also studied architecture and engineering in Philadelphia. Col. Rodgers married Sarah Peary, daughter of Commander Matthew C. Peary, in 1841. After serving as a civilian engineer he enlisted in the Union Army and rapidly rose to the rank of Colonel, serving mostly in the Shenandoah Valley. He died in 1891.

John A. Rodgers was the son of Robert S. and the grandson of John Rodgers. He was born in 1848 and became a midshipman in 1863. In 1898, he was the executive officer of the battleship Indiana and participated in the Spanish-American War. In 1902, he commanded the cruiser Albany and served with the Asiatic squadron. In 1904 Rodgers was among those who rushed for the adoption of wireless telegraphy in the U. S. Navy. From 1904 until 1906 he commanded the battleship Illinois and in 1910 he retired to become a professor of naval tactics at Harvard and the Institute of Technology. He died in 1933 and he is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

His son, Commander John Rodgers, represented the fourth generation of family naval officers. He was born in 1881 and graduated from the Naval Academy in 1903. He rose to the rank of Commander in 1920, being the second naval officer to be licensed as an aviator. After surviving a crash-landing

## SION HILL\* Description

### The Outbuildings

There are also a number of outbuildings on the estate, the only stone one being a small smokehouse just north of the main dwelling. The rest of the structures are exclusively frame. The main barn, southwest of the main house, consists of vertical board sheathing and treenailed girt-post-brace constructions as well as king trusses. The roof is gable-flank and wood-shingled, and the barn is crowned with a box-shaped louvered cupola. The other structures feature vertical or batten-strip siding, but only the three large barns have stone foundations. The inside framing of all of these structures is similar; hand-cut beams and posts, logs and pegged or mortise-tenon joints. The roofs are tin in the case of the dairy and the extreme southern buildings, or else they are slate or wood shingled.

### SION HILL- Significance

in the Pacific in 1925, he was made Bureau Chief of Naval Aeronautics, and he was killed while testing an aircraft in 1926.

TITLE SEARCH

<u>Libre</u>		<u>Folio</u>																	
GRG	823	545	In 1969, Montgomery M. Green conveyed 40.556 acres into a trust for his children.																
GCB	298	235	In 1946, John F. Meigs imparted 87 acres of Sion Hill to Montgomery M. Green.																
GCB	289	39	In 1945, Frank H. Jacobs devised the property to John F. Meigs.																
Will																			
AJG	21	322	The last will of Elizabeth Rogers left the property to John F. Meigs in 1937.																
Will																			
AJG	19	87	In 1931, Rear Admiral John A. Rodgers bequeathed the estate to his wife, Elizabeth.																
Will																			
HTB	13	202	In 1892, Sarah P. Rodgers, widow of Robert S. Rodgers, designated that her executors be John A. and Robert S. Rogers. Sarah received the property in 1863 from Robert S. Rodgers.																
HDG	37	176	This 1851 division stated that Robert S. Rodgers resided at Sion Hill.																
HDG	35	225	Robert S. Rodgers acquired Sion Hill in 1849 from Minerva Rodgers, the widow of John Rodgers.																
HD	24	290	In 1841, Jerusha Denison conveyed to Minerva Rodgers and others the following parcels:																
			<table> <tr> <td>Eaton</td><td>400 acres</td><td>Montserado's Addition</td><td>8½ acres</td></tr> <tr> <td>Eaton's Addition</td><td>14</td><td>Littleworth</td><td>275</td></tr> <tr> <td>Eaton's Second Addition</td><td>23</td><td>Level's Addition</td><td>59½</td></tr> <tr> <td>Montserado</td><td>610</td><td>Rich Level</td><td>400</td></tr> </table>	Eaton	400 acres	Montserado's Addition	8½ acres	Eaton's Addition	14	Littleworth	275	Eaton's Second Addition	23	Level's Addition	59½	Montserado	610	Rich Level	400
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Montserado	610	Rich Level	400																
HD	S	304	In 1806, the trustees of Gideon Denison conveyed all of the before-mentioned lands to Jerusha Denison.																
JLG	M	281	In 1795, the Rev. John Ireland transferred 59½ acres of Level's Addition to Gideon Denison.																
JLG	K	413	In 1789, Thomas Giles, son of Jacob Giles, conveyed the tract to the Rev. John Ireland. Samuel Howell had acquired a grant from the proprietorship for Level's Addition, which he willed to his daughter, Abarilla. Abarilla married Micajah Mitchell who sold the land to Jacob Giles.																
JLG	C	455	In 1780, Jacob Giles obtained the property from Micajah Mitchell.																

SION HILL  
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Harford County Land Records

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Lord, Walter; By the Dawn's Early Light, 1972, W. W. Norton, New York.

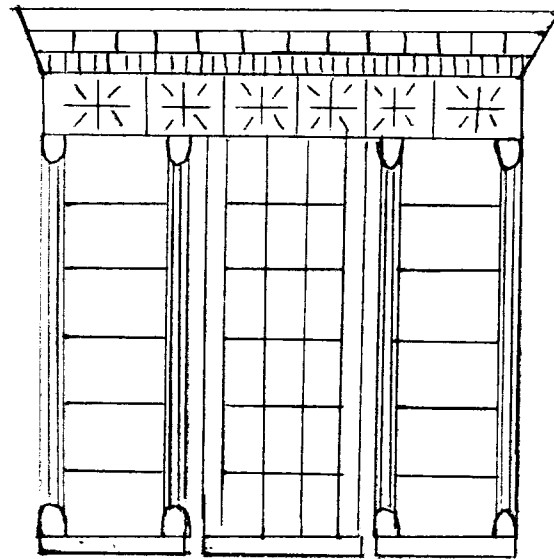
Martenet's Map of 1878

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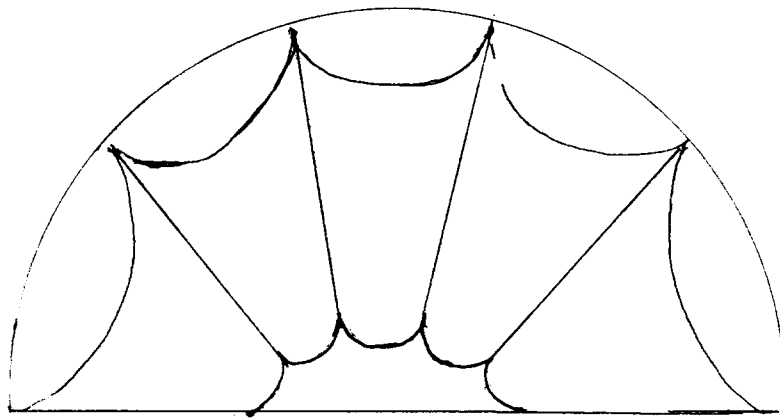
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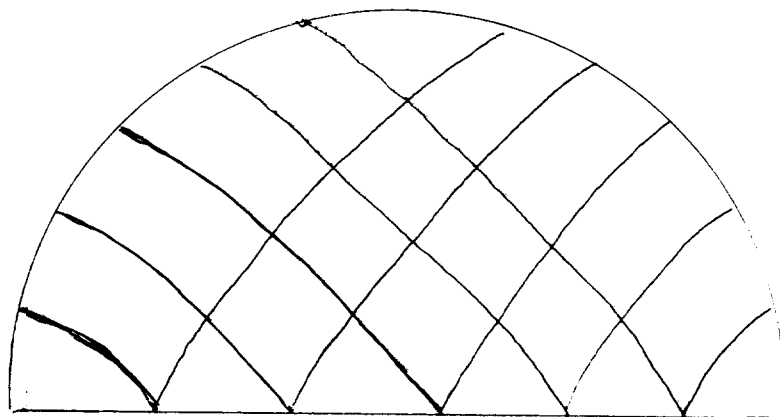
SION HILL



Palladian Window  
East Face

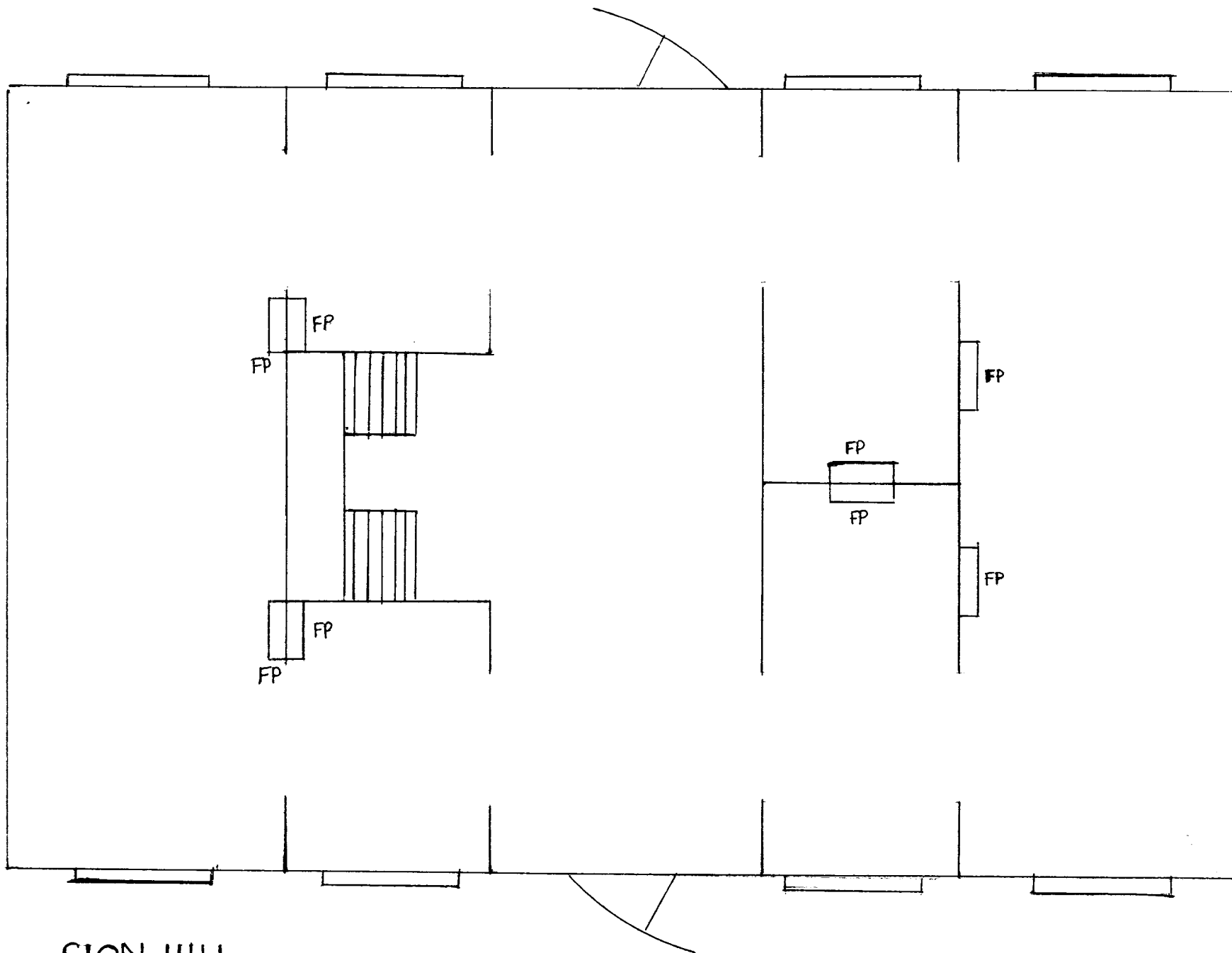


Third Floor  
West Side



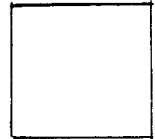
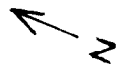
Third Floor  
East Face

44-525

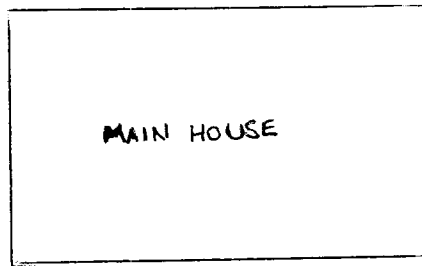


SION HILL

HA-525



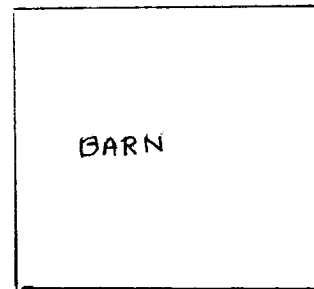
SMOKE HOUSE



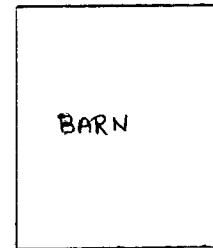
MAIN HOUSE



GARAGE



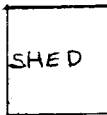
BARN



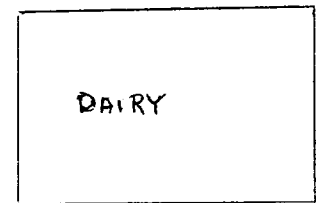
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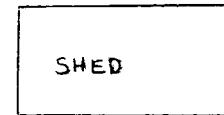
CORN  
CRIB



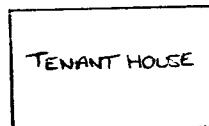
SHED



DAIRY



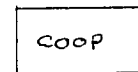
SHED



TENANT HOUSE



SHED



COOP

SION HILL







Sion Hill HA 525

Harford Co, MD

Jeremy Green 12/89

Sion Hill

View from House to Bay

1/14



Sion Hill HA 525

Harford Co, MD

C. Woot, 12/89

Harford Co, Dept of Planning & Zoning

S. Facore

2/14



Sloan Hill HA 525

Hartford Co., MD

C. Weeks 12/89

Hartford Co Dept of Planning & Zoning

S. Farace - Detail

2-14



Sim April HA 525

Hartford Co. MD

C Weeks 12/89

Hartford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

S. Sarason - settlement & 2nd floor detail

1/1/4





Sloan Hill HA 525

Hartford Co, MD

C Week, 12/29

Hartford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

W facade (school room & dormitory)

3/14



Stone Hill WA 525

Hartford Co. MD

C. Weeks 17/89

Hartford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

10 Route

6/17



Site #117 PA-525

Hartford Co., MD

C. W. Webb, 12/89

Hartford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

E. Laake

7/14



Sion Hill HA 525

Harford Co., MD

Jeremy Green

Sion Hill

Dining Room

8/14





Sim Hill HA 525

Harford Co, MD

Jeremy Green 12/09

Sim Hill

Hall

9/14



Sion Hill HA 525

Hartford Co., MD

C. Loomis 12/89

Hartford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

Garden Ld of House

10/14



Sio. Hill HA-525

Hartford Co. MD

C Weeks 12/89

Hartford Co Dept of Planning & Zoning

Gordon - NW of House

U/14



Swan Hill HA 525

Hartford Co. MD

C. Weeks 12/89

Hartford Co. Dept. of Planning & Zoning

Corr. S. of House

12/14





Sun 2/1/14 HA - 525

Harford Co. MD

C Works 12/15

Harford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

Gordon & Gates - N of House

13/14



Sim 71. LA - 525

Hartford Co. MD

C Weeks 12/89

Hartford Co Dept of Planning & Zoning  
Tenant House

12/14



Sion Hill

HA-525

Havre de Grace, MD

Susan M. Deeney

October, 1976

West



Sion Hill Tenant House  
Havre de Grace, MD  
Susan M. Deeney  
October, 1976  
East

HA-525